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THE LIFE OF S. PHILIP NERI.

THE LIFE

OF

SAINT PHILIP NERI,

APOSTLE OF ROME.

BY

ALFONSO, CARDINAL CAPECELATRO,

ARCHBISHOP OF CAPUA,
AND LIBRARIAN OF HOLY CHURCH.
SOMETIME SUPERIOR OF THE ORATORY OF NAPLES:

TRANSLATED BY

THOMAS ALDER POPE, M.A.
OF THE ORATORY.

Second Edition.

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NEW YORK, CINCINNATI, CHICAGO: BENZIGER BROTHERS.
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CONTENTS OF VOL. II.

BOOK III.

S. PHILIP, FOUNDER OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE ORATORY—(Continued).

CHAP.		PAGE
V.	S. PHILIP AND BARONIO	1
VI.	GROWTH OF THE CONGREGATION—MIRACLES—PHILIP AT THE VALLICELLA—LETTER TO HIS NIECE—CONVERSIONS OF PROTESTANTS AND JEWS — POPE GREGORY XIII. AND S. PHILIP	30
VII.	SIXTUS V.—PHILIP'S GOVERNMENT OF THE CONGREGATION—THE RULE	55
VIII.	S. PHILIP AND MUSIC	77
IX.	THE ORATORY IN REQUEST IN ITALY—BEGINNINGS OF THE CONGREGATION OF NAPLES—MIRACLES OF S. PHILIP	101
X.	THE ORATORY OF NAPLES	123
XI.	THE CAPUCHINS—S. FELIX OF CANTALICE, S. CAMILLUS OF LELLIS, BLESSED LEONARDI, AND CARDINAL FREDERIC BORROMEO	156
XII.	A LETTER OF S. PHILIP'S—S. CATERINE OF RICCI —S. FRANCIS OF SALES AND OTHER SERVANTS OF GOD—BODIES OF THE MARTYRS GIVEN TO PHILIP —HIS KNOWLEDGE OF THE SECRETS OF THE HEART	190
XIII.	S. PHILIP AND THE CARDINALS—THE ARISTOCRACY OF ROME	222

CHAP. PAGE

XIV. S. PHILIP AND THE INTELLECTUAL LIFE OF HIS CONGREGATION—THE POLISH COLLEGE IN ROME . 259

XV. GREGORY XIV.—THE CARDINALATE—PHILIP'S ILLNESS—DEATH OF F. GIGLI—F. CONSOLINI—PHILIP'S COURAGE AND MIRACLES 292

XVI. CLEMENT VIII. AND S. PHILIP—PROMOTION OF THE SAINT'S COMPANIONS—HIS SPIRIT SHOWN IN THEM 320

XVII. CLOSING YEARS OF PHILIP'S LIFE—VISION OF THE MADONNA 359

XVIII. S. PHILIP AND HENRY IV. OF FRANCE—THE ORATORY IN FRANCE 382

XIX. DEATH OF CORDELLA—PHILIP'S LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH—VISIONS AND MIRACLES 409

XX. AFTER S. PHILIP'S DEATH 444

APPENDIX—

1. THE LAST WILL OF SER FRANCESCO NERI . . 471

2. S. PHILIP'S SONNETS 472

3. S. PHILIP'S LETTERS 475

4. MESSER VITTORIO DELL' ANCISA 502

5. CONGREGATIONS OF THE ORATORY 503

THE LIFE OF S. PHILIP NERI.

BOOK III.

PHILIP, FOUNDER OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE ORATORY—continued.

CHAPTER V.

S. PHILIP AND BARONIUS.

When Philip saw his beloved Congregation of the Oratory founded in the Vallicella, one great purpose of his life was accomplished; he had confronted the pretended reformation with a living example of real and holy reform. He had formed in the new congregation a nursery of good ecclesiastics, who might be to all the clergy an example of what the priestly life should be. But his work was not done. The protestant revolt was the work of strong heads as well as strong passions, and he saw that its leaders were bent on strengthening their position with the aid of theology, history, and general literature. He saw, too, that it was necessary to meet them on their own ground; and he did not shrink from the encounter of thought and research, as he had not shrunk from the encounter of action and work. But he thoughtfully chose the weapons best suited to his

own natural disposition, to the special character and type of his sanctity, and to the ends he proposed to himself for the good of the Church; and he chose them wisely and well.

As he had been throughout his whole course indirectly assailing the factitious life of protestantism by diffusing throughout the Church a renewed life of virtue and perfection, so did he proceed in the sphere of doctrine. He refuted error without seeming to refute it. He left it to others to combat, with subtlety of reasoning and weight of erudition, the errors of protestantism one by one. He took another course; he brought out into light the truths of Christianity, and set forth all their beauty. He thought that, just as the holy lives of the children of the Church take away from protestantism its pretext and its aliment, even so the light of the Church's teaching, so penetrating yet so mild, suffices of itself to disperse the darkness of heretical teaching. And thus, it may be said that he did not aim so much at demonstrating, as at exhibiting, the virtues and the doctrines of the Church—a method of persuasion somewhat different from direct controversy, and always singularly availing.

Thus, as the most effectual method of refuting the teaching of the innovators, he made choice of Church history, requiring, as it does, most accurate knowledge of theology and a boundless erudition. Bozio and others of Philip's disciples treated the doctrine of the Church and the errors of protestantism scientifically; but he felt that history, set forth in its true light, was the most convincing evidence of the Catholic faith. He did not think it necessary to draw a veil over the faults of Popes or bishops; he wished the Church to be seen at all times in the light of divine Providence, just as

she really was, the treasure of God, though in vessels of earth. It is probable that he was in part determined to this choice by the fact that the innovators had begun to publish a history of the Church from their point of view, of vast extent and great display of learning; but he also foresaw with unerring precision that the apologists of error would evade the inexorable grasp of the scholastic theology, and roam at will amidst the events of the past, which may be so easily viewed in various lights, grouped in various forms, and stripped of all certainty as truths, and of all cogency as arguments.

Philip had no thought of undertaking this great work himself; he chose as his instrument his most beloved disciple, Cesare Baronio. He formed the idea and sketched the plan of the Ecclesiastical Annals, and then gave it to another to fill up and complete. The Annals are the fruit of the toil of Baronio, but they are in great part the creation of Philip too. It was the one idea of his life to do much without appearing to be doing anything, to hide himself and to be regarded as ignorant and incapable. Many great saints have written books, and others have left us only the record of their doings; but of Philip we may say in truth that, although he did not write one line of the Annals, he was the life and the inspiration of the whole work. He first conceived the idea of a history of the Church which should be full and complete and universal. There had been histories of great value, but they were incomplete fragments, and did not reach further than the earliest ages of the Church. There were chroniclers and annalists in many monasteries, but none had undertaken a history of the universal Church such as Philip projected. The conception

was all his own; and we find traces of it in his life when he was as yet young, and absorbed in the labours of his apostolate to the exclusion of all literary work or study. Thus in 1559, eight years after he had been ordained priest, we find him suddenly commanding Cesare Baronio to discourse in the Oratory exclusively on Ecclesiastical History, and to relate it as a whole from the origin of the Church to his own times. Baronio completed his task in two or three years, and then Philip commanded him to begin it again, and to treat it with greater depth and fulness. Seven times the command was repeated and obeyed; and while thus narrating to the faithful for so many years the annals of their predecessors in the faith, he naturally acquired a complete mastery of his subject, and his mind was saturated with its spirit. It was a strange command; but whatever may have been Philip's motives in restraining his great disciple within the limits of this one subject, the result abundantly justified his wisdom and sagacity. It was certainly an idea worthy of Philip, and quite in keeping with the special character of his sanctity, to create one of the greatest books the Church possesses, out of a series of humble and modest discourses, delivered to the brothers of a little Oratory in a simple and almost conversational style.

We find no trace in the records of our saint's life, of the time when he at length commanded Baronio to begin to write the Annals, for which he had made such long preparation. It was probably during the pontificate of Gregory XIII., and when the Oratory was in its own home at the Vallicella. But, however this may be, it is well to remember that the preparation imposed by Philip on Baronio consisted of thirty years of preaching, and that the researches and toil of all

these years were intended by him to converge to this one point, the production of the Ecclesiastical Annals. There was time enough to perfect the outline of the whole history, to become familiar with all its details and all its aspects, to study its lights and shades, to fill up every void, to amplify and to retrench, and to retouch and correct the whole work.

While Baronio was continuing these sermons at the Oratory without intermission or change, Philip was intent, not only on directing all the studies of his beloved disciple towards the object he had so much at heart, but also on making the workman worthy of his work. He knew that neither genius nor learning alone will make a great book—it requires a great man; a book is truly great when we see in it depth and vigour of thought, fulness of learning, and wealth of illustration, all bright with the light of divine truth, and clothed with the beauty of holiness. All truly great books are the full and adequate reflexions of their writers' souls, and, if they be wise and saintly, they leave on their work the impress of their own excellence. For a work of such boundless range as that sketched by Philip, a work which embraces the whole life and being of the religion of Christ, there was needed not only genius, and culture, and learning, but, above all, a mental vision freed from human passion, serene, humble, comprehensive, enlightened always with an ardent love of truth, and enamoured of the infinite beauty of virtue.

Philip's first thought, then, was to form the man to write the book, and to form him he took not less than thirty years.

No sooner did our saint perceive the penetrating and comprehensive genius of Baronio than he fixed on him as the writer of the Annals. He overruled, as we have

seen, all obstacles to his vocation, such as the efforts of his father to get him away from Rome, and those of the bishop of Sora, who offered him a canonry and other ecclesiastical dignities. Seeing that the very fervour with which Baronio gave himself to the service of God might be an impediment in the way of study, he restrained and moderated its warmth, and withheld him from becoming a Capuchin, or entering any other order of religion. He employed his authority to impose on his disciple a steady perseverance in his studies, to which, indeed, Baronio was of himself inclined. But all this seemed to him little unless the heart of the great writer were moulded and sanctified, for in all truly christian books the heart has a great and the better share. He therefore made the life of his beloved disciple a life of prayer and of charity, and, at first, employed him much in visiting the hospitals. Baronio made such progress in charity that he gave away to the poor not only all the little money he had, but even his own clothes and linen. We are told, in the memoirs of the time, that, in a season of great scarcity, he sold a silver reliquary which he valued greatly, in order to supply the wants of those around him. And as Philip dreaded especially lest pride should dim the clearness and the beauty of a mind so richly endowed, there is scarcely a mortification which he did not impose on Baronio. It may seem to us strange that Philip should make him for so long a time cook to the Congregation of S. Giovanni; but it was doubtless intended to crush utterly within him all self-love and self-pleasing. The saint seemed at times to take pleasure in making Cesare appear ridiculous by commanding him to do things which seemed absurd in themselves and unbefitting his position. Thus he would

send him through Rome to buy a very small quantity of wine in a very large flask; he would bid him carry the cross at funerals just as the most needy clerks do; and one day, at a wedding feast, he made him sing the *Miserere;* and thus, when at length Baronio began, in obedience to Philip's command, to write the Ecclesiastical Annals, he was a man of solid and tested virtue. He was humble and patient, dead to the world and to himself, inured to toil and fatigue, docile as a child to the slightest intimation of Philip's will, calm and self-possessed in every emergency. There is in the life of Baronio an incident of great interest connected with the writing of the Annals. He was wont to go daily on foot to S. Peter's, it was believed by S. Philip's advice, and there to pray with such fervour that his eyes were often swollen with weeping. Day by day he prostrated himself before the image of the Prince of the Apostles, saying always the same two words, so beautiful in their simplicity: *obedience* and *peace;* and then he would kneel at the tomb of the Apostle and say the same words, imploring him to put forth his strength in aid of the Church, so disquieted and rent by the protestant heresy. And doubtless this habit kept ever alive in his heart the love of holy Church, and accustomed him to view it always in the centre of its unity, the great apostle S. Peter.

Although Philip had been thus for so many years preparing Baronio for the great work of the Annals, he found it no easy task to overcome the reluctance and resistance of his chosen instrument. He had made of him the most humble of disciples, and now this very humility made him recoil from accomplishing the design of his master. He laid before Philip the magnitude of the work, its difficulty and its novelty, his own

very slender abilities, his very insufficient learning, his many occupations, and the repugnance he naturally felt at setting himself to a task of such length and toil. Philip listened, and quietly repeated his command. Then Baronio sought to evade the unwelcome obedience by suggesting that Onofrio Panvinio was a very learned man, in every way more capable of carrying out Philip's design, and already employed upon the history of the Church. But Philip listened still, and said: "As to the church history, Cesare, it is *you* who have to write it." Baronio had the most perfect confidence in Philip, but still he felt distressed and perplexed, until an end was put to his resistance in the following manner. He saw beside him in a dream Ottavio Panvinio, and, as soon as he saw him, he began to entreat him to take up the work of the church history; but Panvinio would not listen to him, and, when he insisted, turned abruptly away. Still Baronio continued his entreaties, urging every reason he could think of to make him see that he ought to undertake this work. And, while he was urging his reasons with great vehemence, he heard a voice very dear to him, which, in a gentle but imperious tone, said: "Hold your peace, Cesare, and don't wear yourself out with all these reasonings; for, as to the church history, it is *you* who have to do it, and not Onofrio." When Baronio awoke he told it all to Philip, and the saint turned it off with a jest, saying: "Get you gone with those dreams of yours, and do just what I command you." And thus was overcome the sturdy resistance of the humble disciple, and he at once set about the task enjoined on him.

It might be supposed that Philip's part in the great work of the Annals was now over, but Baronio himself tells us what interest he took in it, and with what

minute, persevering, and helpful attention he followed it throughout. In the preface to the eighth volume, the first which was published after the saint's death, he felt himself at length free to pour out his whole heart; he could not do so, he says, "while he of whom I spake was alive, who so despised and hated his own praises." He begins by saying that it is a thing most pleasing, most useful, and most necessary to be mindful of those who have gone before us, that we may not incur the reproach of ingratitude; that the Holy Scripture bids us ascribe to the fathers the prosperity and the successes of their children, and how much more to such a father as Philip, who had so greatly loved him, and had begotten him to God with his apostolic spirit. As to the Annals, he wished that all should know that they were not to be ascribed to the skill or toil of him who wrote them, but that they were in every respect Philip's own work. To say otherwise would be both pride and falsehood; were it not presumptuous to liken things of earth to things divine, he might use the words of Jesus and say: *the Father who abideth in Me, He doeth the works.* He then continues: "it was the blessed Philip, who, by inspiration of God, commanded me to undertake this work, even as Moses committed to workmen the building of the tabernacle, after the pattern he had seen in the mount. I set myself, then, to this great undertaking by reason of his oft-repeated command, although I felt a great repugnance to it, and sorely distrusted my own ability. Nevertheless, I accepted it in obedience to the will of God; and that same will led him to urge me continually onward, so that if at times I sank exhausted under the burden, and sought to take a little rest, he would goad me on with sharp rebukes." And then he turns to Philip

thus: "Thou didst greatly yearn, O my father, with zealous compassion over the woes and the anguish of holy Church. And when with thy mind, so illumined by God and so filled with the prophetic spirit, thou sawest those Centuries of Satan issue forth from the gates of hell to the bane and grievous wrong of the Church, thou didst arise to go forth and do battle on behalf of the people of God. Thou didst not set thyself to gather together a host of warriors, greater than or at least equal to that of the enemy; but, as knowing well that God chooses the weak things of the world to confound the strong, thou didst choose one of thine own, and the very least among his brethren, and of meanest ability; and him thou didst send forth alone and unarmed to do battle with so many veteran foes. And, as though thou hadst quite other intention, thou didst not set him at once in the broad field of battle, but to prove his strength thou didst choose a narrow room, the Oratory of S. Girolamo della Carità, bidding him there narrate in daily discourses the history of the Church. And having begun this at thy command, and happily continued it for thirty years, I went through the whole history of the Church seven times. Meanwhile thou didst stand continually over me, animating me with thy presence, goading me onwards with thy words, rigid exactor (forgive me that I say so) of the daily task thou didst expect of me. And thus it seemed to me a sacrilege if I ever at any time turned for diversion to somewhat else, for thou couldst not endure that I should for a moment leave that purpose of thine. Often, I confess, O my father Philip, was I almost scandalized at thee, it seeming to me that thou didst deal tyrannically with me; for I took measure of my own strength alone, and saw not that thou wast in silence treating

the whole matter first with God. Not only was there never given me companion to help me, but as befell the sons of Israel in Egypt, the toil grew ever greater, and no straw given, and many other things were required of me. To the sore burden of the Annals was added the cure of souls, and preaching, and the government of the house, and many other things which were day by day laid on me, now by one and now by another. And thus it seemed, O dearest father, that by dealing thus with me, or by allowing others thus to deal, thou didst require of me almost any other thing than that which thou didst in very truth most ardently desire. . . . And thus, according to thy wont, it was thou who didst fight, but with another's hand; thou wast ever working wonders, yet didst shun appearing wonderful, dreading above all things the being praised and magnified. To this end didst thou often cover thy wisdom with the cloak of folly, mindful ever of the words of the holy apostle: *whoso wisheth to be wise, let him become a fool.* Nor did the vain delights of the world ever really have sway over thee; but, like David who feigned himself to be mad, thou didst ever seek, by the outer show of thy conduct, to hide from men the gifts of the Holy Spirit within thee."

Baronio then expresses his wish that this protestation should not only be printed with the Annals, but be hung as a witness for ever at the shrine of the saint; and thus, after speaking of the wonders daily taking place at that shrine, he adds: "Give me then a place, O my brothers, for to you I turn who keep guard around the place of his rest, a sorrowing and a noble company; give me then a place, that these my words of thanks, all unworthy though they be of the benefits I have received from Philip, may for ever remain hung

by his shrine, yet so that, together with the Annals, they may go round the wide world as well. Let them be as a pillar which moves and speaks, and proclaims in large characters who was the projector and the builder up of the Annals. Wherefore, if men should gather any fruit from them, let them give chiefest thanks to Philip. Let, then, this my protestation be affixed to his tomb, as an epitaph never to be effaced. And thou, O my father Philip, smile upon this work of thine; and that, as Joab said to David, the victory may be ascribed to thy name, come and finish what yet remains of the war. . . . And to me, thy son, to whom while living on earth thou wast always a guard, keeping me by thy watchful care, ruling me with thy counsel, and in thy great patience bearing with me, now that thou livest in heaven, reach forth mightier aid, and of thy perfect and consummate charity send me more availing succour. Grant me, further, that I may obtain from thee, but in fuller measure, what S. Gregory of Nazianzum affirms that he obtained from S. Basil, that even after his death he still continued to admonish and reprove him. Take thou then in hand the reins of my life, guide what remains of my feeble age that I stumble not; that when my work is done I may reach that blessed rest thou dost now enjoy in the Father, in the Son, and in the Holy Ghost. Amen." Thus does Baronio pour forth the thankfulness of his soul, and surprise us by revealing to us the share that Philip had in the great work of the Annals. And thus we see how that work was bound up with the whole life of our saint, and shows us its meaning and its aim.

While Philip was thus in so many ways furthering the labours of Baronio, the disciple neglected nothing

that might bring them to a happy issue. F. Bernabei of the Congregation tells us, in his Life of Baronio, how the Annals were written. Baronio began by reading with great attention all the writers who had ever treated of the history of the Church and of ecclesiastical matters, and day by day took notes of what fell in with his design. He bestowed especial pains on chronology, the intricacy of which stimulated rather than wearied his zeal. It was a work of incredible toil to narrate a history so vast and long and involved as is that of the Catholic Church, assigning to each fact not only the year, but even the month, and often the very day, of its occurrence. But he spared neither thought nor toil, as feeling the importance and the value of their result. Chronology removes the obscurity which hangs around many events; it puts together the disjointed, scattered members of the body of history, and gives it its due form and proportions.

Baronio, moreover, studied with the greatest care the Fathers of the Church, both Greek and Latin, and from that treasure-house of christian literature drew inexhaustible wealth. He read also the works of profane historians, more especially the many chronicles which relate the history of Italy, so closely interwoven with that of the Church. He also gave especial attention to the history of the holy Roman Empire; but these many studies, long and toilsome as they were, were but a small part of the weary labour. If we would form to ourselves an idea of its gigantic difficulty, we must transport ourselves back to the time in which it was undertaken and accomplished. In our own day, we have such abundance of works on every branch of Church history, that its study is

comparatively easy, and its materials close to hand. If it be necessary to consult manuscripts, they are now accessible as they were not in other times. When Baronio lived and worked, printed books were so few that the greater part of his investigations lay in manuscripts, detached and disjointed, scattered throughout innumerable libraries, and very hard to decipher. It is this that amazes us in the great work of Baronio, and the more when we remember that he wrote with his own hand the whole of the twelve folios of his Annals, without aid of copyist or amanuensis.

But great genius and a robust will overcome all difficulties. Baronio had both, and being goaded on by Philip's incessant inquiries and commands, he made himself master of the contents of the principal libraries of Rome, passed day after day in that of the Vatican, consulted his friends, and recurred for help to the most learned men all over Europe; his correspondence shows us with what patient humility and zeal he wrote in all directions to get the information which might clear up some obscure fact, and welcomed the counsels of his many friends. He was not well versed in Greek, and knew but little of Hebrew; and therefore relied much for help in these on Pietro Morino, Jacopo Sismondo, Cardinal Sirleto, and others. Even on subjects of which he was entirely master, his humility made him almost timid, ever watchful, and thankful for all advice, and for every confirmation of his statements.[1] In a word, while the Annals astound us by their erudition, their research, and the genius which has welded into a unity a mass of events so immense, they delight us with the impress they bear

[1] We shall see in the sequel how often, and with what humility, he turned for advice and aid to the other fathers of the Oratory.

of the hand of a great christian writer, of one who never thinks of himself, feels neither elation nor vanity, and is intent solely on the Glory of God. It is a grand book, and the more grand that we see reflected in it the humility of Philip and of his chosen disciple.

One peerless gift of the great writer of the Annals, and it is a gift peculiarly christian, is his love of truth. Bernabei devotes to it a chapter of his life of Baronio, and it shines forth from every page. Fra Paolo Sarpi himself, who was so hostile to Baronio in many things, and who urged the learned Casaubon to write against him, warns him never to charge or suspect him of bad faith or disingenuousness; not only because he was a man of absolute integrity, but because no one who knew him would credit the writer who should accuse him of disloyalty to truth. And, indeed, his love of truth was so great that he was always tormented with the thought that he might unconsciously violate it. In uttering it he had no respect of persons, whether emperors, princes, or nations; and even when it cost him a bitter pang to speak it to the rulers of the Church, he spoke it with all due reverence indeed, and with great humility, but he did not shrink from speaking it. In Baronio the love of truth had the intensity and the glow of a passion, and he spared neither time nor toil to track it out. If he felt any doubt, he used every accessible means to dispel it; and he often spoke to his friends of his eager desire that the Annals should be true and exact, humbly entreating them to point out the least inexactitude they might discover, and repeating to them the words of S. Augustine: "I shall love with a special love the man who most rigidly and severely corrects my errors."

Of the character and worth of the book which was the outcome of so many virtues and so many toils, I shall speak presently; I wish now to fix attention on the part S. Philip took in it, and in another work of great value written by Baronio, and on his ideal of the manner of man a christian writer should be. By advice of Philip as well as of Cardinal Sirleto, Pope Gregory XIII. intrusted to Baronio the great task of correcting and annotating the Roman Martyrology. It was a work of criticism, of high importance, and demanding for its due execution deep and prolonged research. In the first place, the reform the Pope had made in the Calendar had deranged the feasts of the whole year, and there were corrections to be made more necessary and more vital still. So early as 1578, the task had been assigned to Giovan Pietro Galisini, a protonotary apostolic; but his work, which was printed at Milan, was deemed prolix, uncritical, and confused. Something better was urgently demanded, and every one wished to see what Baronio would do; S. Philip himself was anxious that his disciple and son should give, in this first book, a specimen and essay of the far greater book of the Annals. At Philip's instigation, then, Baronio took on himself this added burden, though it seemed to him that he had neither time nor leisure to do what was needed. He would have liked to be relieved of some of his duties as a father of the Oratory, and the rather that none of the other fathers was constrained to such extraordinary and unintermitting toil. But Philip wished to keep him always humble, and abhorred all singularity in the Oratory, and, therefore, refused his petition. One day Baronio hoped that the holy father would so far relieve him as to allow him to say mass at what hour he might choose, without

being obliged to wait for the summons of the sacristan; but Philip would not relax his rule, and refused all dispensation. Baronio submitted without a word, although the blow to his self-love was severe. And nevertheless he completed the arduous task, and the book was published, after having been examined by a congregation of cardinals and prelates. The learned notes and the many emendations he made, the admirable dissertations on the Acts of the Martyrs and on other subjects, secured the approbation of all; and this Martyrology, enriched with new notes and reproduced in 1630, was adopted by the Church, and retained its place until a few changes were made in it by Pope Benedict XIV.

But a sorer trial still awaited Baronio while he was employed upon the Martyrology and the Annals When Pope Gregory XIII. commanded him to undertake the correction and revision of the Martyrology, he offered him a pension of ten gold crowns a month; and when Baronio declined accepting it, alleging that he had taken a vow of poverty, the Pope obliged him to accept it and use it to defray the expenses of his researches. Not many years after, when Baronio presented the completed Martyrology to Sixtus V., the successor of Gregory XIII., the Pope not only praised the work greatly, but insisted that Baronio should accept another pension, to enable him to go on with the Annals, the publication of which he had not yet begun. As soon as Baronio returned home he told Philip of this pension, and Philip, who was always devising mortifications for him, told him that now he had this money he must contribute towards the common expenses of the house as the other fathers did. But Baronio had thrown himself with all his

soul into the Annals, and was burning with the desire to see at least the first volume published, and hence he was disquieted and made some remonstrances. He had, he said, at first refused this pension and had afterwards accepted it at the Pope's command, only with the intention of expending it all on the Annals, and that this was the intention of the Pope in giving it. How then could he give to the Congregation money which was not his own? And was not Philip himself continually urging him to get on with the Annals? How could he get on, if he were deprived of every resource of money? Philip quietly answered that he must obey at once without a word. On this one occasion only Baronio was less docile than his wont. He went to F. Bozio, who was also a great student and a writer, and who therefore knew how necessary this money was to him, and implored him to go to Philip, and get him to see that he really ought not to ask him to pay his pension from money given him for quite another purpose. Bozio, who greatly loved his friend, did as he was requested, and pleaded Cesare's cause with Philip, but without any effect. The saint even seemed much displeased, and sent him by Bozio this message: "Cesare, either obey or go; God has no need of men." Bozio then tenderly exhorted his friend to go and submit himself to Philip at once. Baronio felt at once smitten with compunction; he arose in all humility and threw himself at Philip's feet, bewailing his disobedience, and offering him himself and all the money he had. Philip's heart was deeply touched, and he said with loving emotion: "Now, Cesare, keep all the money the Pope gave you and all else. I wanted only the sacrifice of your will; that suffices me. Now

learn always to obey, for obedience will be your salvation."[1]

These two incidents in Philip's relations with Baronio may seem at first sight in contradiction with his gentle and affectionate nature. But if we look at them more closely we shall see that while Philip eagerly desired the completion of the Annals, and furthered it in so many ways, he feared lest anything should imperil the humility of his beloved disciple. In his eyes humility was the most precious adornment of the Christian soul; and hence the almost tremulous anxiety he so often manifested in regard of Baronio, as his renown grew and extended. Hence it was that each time that Cesare presented to Philip a fresh volume of the great work, the saint concealed the joy of his heart, and gave him no other recompense than the command to serve thirty masses. Now that the humble sermons of the Oratory had expanded into the stately volumes of the Annals, and the name of their writer was known and celebrated throughout Europe, Philip's loving heart would watch lest any taint of pride should dim the bright soul of his disciple. In Rome the most learned cardinals and theologians expressed their amazement and delight, as each new volume appeared. The popes in succession gave the Annals their warm and unreserved approbation; and we know that Gregory XIV., when Cardinal, read every sheet as it was printed, and made notes in the margin. This

[1] Baronio subsequently refused a sum of money offered him by the King of Portugal to help him in the continuation of the Annals, and also another sum offered him by the bishop of Coimbra. He had from Pope Clement VIII. another pension of two hundred crowns for the Annals; and F. Talpa tells us that he went at once to F. Philip to ask him whether he should accept it or not; and if he accepted it, to what uses he should apply it. Philip bade him accept it, and lay it aside for his printing expenses.

was done also by Cardinals Paleotto and Carafa, and by the very learned Monsignor Panigarola. Letters of congratulation poured in from all parts of Europe, and showed that the work found favour not only with Catholic theologians, but with many protestants also. Monsignor Visconti, who was then at the imperial court, wrote that the Annals were most favourably received in Germany, and that some protestants who had set themselves confidently to refute them, had soon given up the attempt in despair. The Archbishop of Antwerp, himself deeply versed in all sacred learning, said that "our writing of ecclesiastical history, compared with that of F. Cesare Baronio, is but the writing of children." And a letter of the abbot of S. Martin's at Antwerp, a man celebrated for his learning, was so enthusiastic in its praise that Baronio turned away and blushed as F. Gigli was reading it to him. All around him was a chorus of praise, well merited indeed, but not the less perilous. And the applause and its peril both increased when it was known that Marco Fuscaro, a man of great repute for learning, was so fascinated with the Annals that he had undertaken the gigantic task of translating them into German.

Those who remember how sensitively S. Augustine feared lest the praise of men should sully the purity of his soul, will feel no surprise that Philip was not quite at ease while so many voices of approval were echoing unceasingly around Baronio. From the very first he had trained him to a most profound humility, and he had never detected in him any symptom of delight in human praise. Yet his great love made him fearful and watchful. He prayed much for his beloved disciple, and in order to nourish in him the grace he

held so dear, and without which all literary glory was to him but a fleeting vapour, he ordered F. Gallonio, a man of great gifts, but still very young, to examine the Annals with the keenest scrutiny, and to expose and confute whatever errors he might find in them. He himself told Baronio of this, and he spoke of it to many, especially to persons of great authority and influence. Baronio felt it very keenly. It seemed hard that his own Father Philip should employ an Oratorian, so much younger than he was, to criticise and correct and refute him. Would it not be necessary that he should defend himself; and how could he defend himself against the attacks of a brother Oratorian so dear to him, without giving scandal and imperilling holy charity? At length he poured out his troubled heart to F. Talpa in a letter, than which nothing can be more touching or more edifying. He says that, after much disquietude and many conflicts with himself, he had come to the conclusion that in this, F. Philip was but giving him further proof of his great love by guarding him from the self-complacency to which the praises of men might tempt him. He had consequently made up his mind to accept that humiliation with gratitude and gladness for the love of God. As for defending himself from the attacks of his brother Gallonio, he would rather die than see himself constrained to do so. If nevertheless necessity, or the love of truth, should so constrain him, he would never do it without the consent of the whole congregation. And he concludes this beautiful letter thus: "That I have written the Annals I know to be wholly the gift of God. . . . wherefore to God alone be the glory, the humiliation to me." This conclusion was precisely the point at which Philip had aimed, and when he saw that

Baronio was as insensible as one dead to the blandishments of praise, and so deeply grounded in humility, he ceased to speak of the criticisms he had charged Gallonio to make, and let the matter quietly drop.

This affectionate watchfulness of Philip never relaxed. Shortly before his death, he called to him his beloved Cesare, and said to him: "Cesare, you have a great many reasons for thinking very lowly of yourself, and the chief of them is that you have written the Annals; for you know it was not by your own industry and toil that you wrote them, but by the singular grace of God." Baronio replied: "Yes, my dearest father, I know it well; all that I have written I owe to God and to your prayers." Three several times Philip said the same words and received the same answer. And Philip passed away from earth to heaven with the glad conviction that the son of his especial love was pervaded throughout with the spirit of Jesus Christ, that his memory would remain amongst men as of one who was as humble as he was great, and who was so great precisely because he was so humble. What a lesson to the men of our time on the right use of the intellect!

Let us now speak of the Annals themselves. The idea of them was suggested, as we have said, by an heretical work which made some noise at that time, the Magdeburg Centuries. It was so called because it contained in thirteen folio volumes the history of the Church during the first thirteen centuries of its life. The plan of it was formed by Matthias Flacius, of Illyria; it was carried out by many writers, of whom the most noted were Wigand, Faber, Corvinus, Gallus, Judex, and Holzhuter; and it was all published between the years 1552 and 1574. But notwithstanding the toil expended on it, it was inaccurate in statement and unattractive

in style. However learned and industrious its writers might be, and with whatever genius endowed, they simply could not give us the history of the Church of God. They had not in them the love of the truth, nor was truth their object in writing; their one aim was to discredit the Church, and to give some show of stability to Lutheranism. And thus their work is rather a passionate apology for their own heresy and revolt than a history. It has sunk by its own weight, and is now held in little esteem by protestants themselves; no one has cared to correct them when they have been shown to be wrong, and their errors have been recklessly repeated from generation to generation.

Many zealous and learned champions of the truth, such as Bruno, Gerebrard, Panvinio, Canisius, and others, had examined and refuted particular errors and misstatements of this work, but as yet none of them had dealt with it as a whole, or even thought of confronting its many misrepresentations with a history at once full, exact, clear, and unimpassioned. This was what Philip proposed to do in the Annals of Baronio; and I speak of them now because the splendour of that great work is reflected back no less on him who inspired it than on him by whom it was executed.[1]

The Annals, then, appear to me one of the most memorable and serviceable works ever undertaken on behalf of the Church. Before Baronio wrote there was no book in which Church history was treated as

[1] These reflections are in great part taken from another work of mine, "*Newman e l'Oratorio Inglese*," 1859. Many protestants have since expressed their admiration of the Annals. Besides Casaubon and the older Spanheim, Montague in the preface *ad apparatum*, Lect. 58 and 59, says that "Baronius studied history with the utmost diligence, thoroughness, and care." And he concludes thus: "The most secret recesses of all antiquity were as well known and familiar to him as my own house is to me."

an organic whole; and yet, as religion is one, and the Church, which is its concrete form, is one, it was not only possible but necessary to gather and arrange the scattered facts of its history and mould them into a unity. When Baronio began his work there were indeed books which gave some account of Popes, or councils, or other matters pertaining to the Church's history, but no one had woven from these materials a continuous history, tracing the relations of the Church with the several states of Christendom, and anticipating false judgments by setting forth the simple unmingled truth. This want was sorely felt in the evil days of the great revolt against the Church. Those facts of her history, which seem obscure and of little moment if viewed apart from each other and from their circumstances, reveal their real importance, and lighten up the whole past when studied in their mutual connexion, and projected upon the times in which they took place. An accurate synthesis is of all things necessary in the study of religion, which gives out its true light only when its many scattered and dispersed rays are concentrated to a point. Now the Annals, as conceived by S. Philip and executed by Baronio, relate year by year, and mould into one, the lives of Popes and emperors, the facts which occurred in East and West, successions of patriarchal sees, acts of councils, letters of supreme pontiffs, and imperial laws which affect the Church. The twelve massive volumes of the Annals strike us with amazement, not only because they contain in all its fulness the history of twelve centuries of the Church's life, but because the thousand threads of fact are so skilfully woven into one tissue, rich and ample and strong. If it be so that, here and there, the great historian has erred in his

appreciation of some particular fact, or rested on some authority which more experienced criticism rejects as apocryphal, who can feel surprise that the daring hand which first essayed a task so difficult and so vast should sometimes miss its mark in the gloom? We wonder rather that he should have sufficed alone for a work so immeasurably beyond the strength of any one man and that he should have done it so thoroughly and so well, as to be by common consent acclaimed the father of Church History. To the honour of the Church we would add that every one of the errors detected in the Annals has been noted and corrected in later editions; and for the honour of S. Philip we cannot forget that three other of his sons, Rinaldi, Laderchi, and Theiner, have devoted themselves to the continuation of the work which death did not allow Baronio to complete.[1]

But Baronio has yet another claim to our gratitude and veneration: he was, if I am not mistaken, the father and first writer of the school which treats the civil history of nations on Christian principles. Of the ancients, two nations alone, besides the Jews, have left us the complete story of their life; I mean Greece and Rome. That life was, however, different in kind from the life of the nations on whom the light of Christianity has shone. If we look at their inner history, their commerce and their handicrafts, their acts and letters, even their worship itself, all were absorbed into the state;

[1] Whatever errors have been detected in Baronio are carefully pointed out in the edition of the Annals printed at Lucca, with notes by Pagi. Isaac Casaubon, Cardinal Norris, Orsi, and Tillemont have made some corrections. Spondanus made an abridgment and a continuation of Baronius, and Bzovius, the Dominican, also imitated and continued the Annals. And now the great work is still carried on with unwearied diligence by the eminent Roman Oratorian, Generoso Calenzio.

outside of the state were only enemies and wars. But far different was the history of the nations, when they had been regenerated by the spirit of the religion of the Cross. They had a common bond of union in the oneness of their faith, in the ties of charity, in their common subjection to one spiritual head; civil life in all its details was renovated by the action of new principles, so that the limits of the history of each nation were necessarily enlarged. We trace to some extent the sense of this necessity in the earliest records of Europe; still, even in the middle ages we have only bare chronicles or fragments of history; we find but little that bears the true stamp and impress of civil history impregnated with the spirit of Christianity. The civil history of christian nations is not merely a faithful record of the doings and fortunes of each; it is the tracing the reasons and the causes of their doings, and their intimate connexion and interdependence as christian nations. Once let the principles of one common religion mould the civilization of the nations, and their history can no longer be isolated and viewed apart; we can understand the history of one Christian people then only when we read it in the general history of Christendom. Now, although this universality of the history of the nations who possess the faith lies implicitly in the very idea of Christianity, it was never brought out and exhibited in its fulness before Baronio wrote, at the moment when Europe was in transition from the civilization of the middle ages to that of modern times. By welding into one whole the history of the many nations who sat beneath the shadow of the Cross, Cesare Baronio was the first writer who showed that even the civil events in the life of Christian peoples cannot be lightly detached and viewed apart. Those

events then stand forth in their true light, and explain each other, when the historian groups them together, compares them, traces them up to their common cause, and moulds them by synthesis into one whole, each part of which stands in its own place, and explains and is explained by the others.

But far higher and more noble still should be the aim of him who would write the civil history of a christian nation. It is not indeed his function to elicit from facts the ideas they imply and embody—that is the philosophy of history—but it is his bounden duty to read all facts in the light of true ideas. And the first idea which should light up the whole history of a christian people is assuredly the sovereign idea of a divine Providence, swaying and controlling all human events, and guiding the free actions of men to one high end. And this end is, necessarily and inevitably, the universal triumph of truth and love in His Church. This was the grand conception of S. Augustine in his *City of God*, and it is the light which must shine forth from the face of all history. Not that all historians are bound to seek in human events a demonstration of this grand truth, as was done by Bossuet in his *Histoire Universelle*, but that they must be pervaded and enlightened by it; otherwise they cannot grasp either the causes or the effects of human actions. That history which does not recognize the principle which guides the free actions of men, and the ends towards which they all unconsciously tend, is not worthy to be called a Christian history. And, inasmuch as Baronio was the first who gathered into one the scattered facts of history, and looked at them in the light of this grand idea; the first to show how, throughout the course of the ages, the countless events which make up the life of Christians

have subserved the triumph of the City of God; we regard him as the father and the initiator of the true civil history of christian nations, viewed in the fulness of its grandeur. The idea sketched in the *City of God* was filled up and perfected in the *Annals*, and demonstrated and illustrated in the *Discours sur l'Histoire Universelle*.

It is true that all the great Italian historians, amongst whom Guicciardini and Machiavelli stand pre-eminent, belong to the *cinque-cento*, the century in which Baronius wrote; and it is true, moreover, of them all that their narrative also began to take a wider range. But, while they rise far above the pettiness and dryness of preceding annalists, they wholly ignored Christianity and its influences, and were bent on bringing back, even into history, the ideas and the forms of paganism. Machiavelli, for instance, not only servilely imitated the style and method of Livy, but steeped his mind in the ideas of pagan Rome, and by them judged the actions of christian nations. Both he and Guicciardini preferred the expedient and the useful to the true; they estimated characters and events by their success or failure; nor had they ever a glimpse of the Hand which disposes the triumphs and the disasters of both good and evil men, for an end that is higher and more lasting, because universal. Gian-Battista Vico alone distinguished himself above the historians of his time by laying down in his *Scienza nuova* the moral laws of history, or rather, in his own words, that ideal and eternal history into which all histories of peoples and of races flow and are absorbed. But, not to speak of its obscurity, the work of Vico would have been impossible but for the labours of those who had previously done so much to raise the dignity of history, and it has

many points in common with the Annals which might be profitably studied.

When S. Philip first commanded his disciple to narrate the history of the Church to a few hundreds of hearers in the little Oratory of S. Girolamo, he probably did not know that he was sowing the seed of which the twelve volumes of the Annals were to be the harvest, and that three centuries later those volumes would be living still, and classed with the glories of the Catholic Church. The saints abandon themselves to the guidance of God, and often do not even suspect the good they are doing. For it is God who is doing the good by means of them, and they are fellow-workers with Him so far forth as they recognize themselves to be only instruments in His hand. As the husbandman knows not, when he casts the good seed into the ground, whether it will bear fruit, and when; even so it is with the saints of God in the good works they sow broadcast in the world.

CHAPTER VI.

GROWTH OF THE CONGREGATION—MIRACLES—PHILIP AT THE VALLICELLA—LETTER TO HIS NIECE—CONVERSIONS OF PROTESTANTS AND JEWS—POPE GREGORY XIII. AND S. PHILIP.

WHILE Baronio was absorbed in his great work, the Congregation of the Oratory was nurtured with the dew of the Divine blessing, and prospered wondrously. The number of the fathers increased rapidly, and amongst them were many men eminent for piety and learning. In the year 1578 alone there were added to the Congregation Flaminio Ricci of Fermo, a doctor of civil and canon law; Giovenale Ancina of Fossano, a Piedmontese, a man well versed in literature and a doctor of medicine, which he had given up for theology; Giovan Matteo Ancina, his brother, who was then studying law; Bernardino Corona, a Roman; Giovan Paolo Curiazio, and Ludovico Parisi, of Florence. Of these the name of Giovenale Ancina is held in especial honour, not only because he was, as we shall see, one of the founders of the Naples Oratory, but because he was for his many virtues appointed Bishop of Salluzzo, and died in the odour of sanctity; and because measures are now being taken to procure his canonization. In this same year 1578 Gregory XIII. declared by a Brief the church of the Vallicella exempt from the jurisdiction of the church of S. Lorenzo in

Damaso and its titular cardinal, in order to free the work of the Congregation from every embarrassment. And thus the Oratory grew, little by little, in numbers and in importance. But although Philip was the soul and life of this great work he was nowhere seen; he still persistently concealed himself from observation in his much-loved cell at S. Girolamo. The fathers who loved him so tenderly, and who daily felt the need of his presence in their midst, were continually urging him to come and live amongst them, but he firmly resisted all their entreaties. In their great veneration for him they resigned themselves to his will, hoping still that some day he might be led to gladden and animate his sons with his personal presence. Some of the more eager members of the community were indeed disposed to give the saint no rest until he came to live with them at the Vallicella, but the older and more prudent quieted their impatience, and persuaded them to leave Philip under the guidance of the Spirit of God.

And thus, while his eyes and his heart were continually on the Vallicella, Philip lived in his little room at S. Girolamo the life with which we have grown familiar. The only difference was that, as if it were the design of God to clothe the words and works of His servant with fuller authority, the gift of miracles became more abiding and habitual. This gift seemed in him to be implied in, and almost identified with, the gift of sanctifying grace; so that as with the lapse of years his interior holiness increased, it shone forth in his daily life with a brighter and an unintermitting splendour. We have seen what miracles he wrought, during the early years of the pontificate of Gregory XIII., on behalf of the household of Fabrizio Massimo;

and many other families of Rome were consoled and cheered by these supernatural manifestations of his charity. Thus, Agnesina Colonna, a noble Roman lady of singular piety, fell ill in 1575, and ere long the physicians gave up all hope of saving her life. Philip went to see her and prayed for her, and then said to her simply: "My daughter, you will not die;" and she recovered at once. In that same year Olimpia Trojana was in danger of death in childbirth. Philip went to her bedside, prayed for her, and gave her his blessing; and immediately the danger vanished, and she gave birth to a daughter. In 1576 we are told that Philip, by the virtue of his prayers, restored to health Gian-Battista Cresci, who was slowly dying of a virulent fever; and in 1577 we find that Ersilia Bacca was already at the point of death when Philip's blessing gave her in an instant health and strength. In 1578 occurred a miracle in which he showed his loving charity, not in bodily healing, but in spiritual succour timely given to a priest, a disciple of his. He appeared to this priest visibly and palpably in his room, when he was sore beset with temptation and struggling with it almost hopelessly, and immediately this vision gave him strength and victory and peace. In 1579 another priest, Giambattista Boniperte of Novara, was taken dangerously ill; in a moment Philip was at his side, laid his hand on his head, and he recovered at once. A few months later he restored to health the noble lady Constanza Draghi dei Crescenzi, who was suffering from a malignant fever supervening on measles, and who had already received the last sacraments, and was dying. And thus again, Philip's gracious hand laid on the head of a priest of the congregation, Pompeo Pateri, cured him at once of a serious illness,

and saved from imminent death the learned physician Michele Mercato of San Miniato. Thus, too, he delivered from the possession and power of the devil, Carlo Mario, one of his spiritual children; and whenever evil spirits drew near him to disturb his prayer, he drove them easily and almost scornfully away.

Two miracles wrought by Philip about this time we must relate in greater detail. In 1576 a young man named Beger, then living in the world, felt a desire, or rather an inspiration, to become a Dominican friar. He went off without any delay to confer on the matter with Fra Peter Martyr, who was then master of novices. On his arrival at the convent he found the Frate preparing to accompany with his novices the funeral of a person who was to be buried in their church. He had just time to tell him in few words why he had come, and the Frate in this hurried way yielded to the urgency of the youth. He asked, however, how long he had felt this inspiration, and Beger answered: "Only this very morning; I have felt it indeed often before, but never so clear and pressing as now." The master of novices then asked him if he knew F. Philip of S. Girolamo; and, finding that he did, he bade him go to Philip, who was, he said, a holy man, and consult with him on this inspiration, with a pious resolve to act according to his counsel and decision. In his eagerness Beger went at once to S. Girolamo, and found Philip in the hall, engaged in conversation with a young man whom he did not know. Philip looked at Beger with his wonted benignity and tenderness, and said to him: "Wait for me a moment, my dear child; I want to speak to you." And very soon Philip came to him, took him

by the hair playfully, and, without letting him open his mouth, said to him: "I know what you want. Fra Peter Martyr has sent you to me to know if you are fit to become a friar. Well now, go, fulfil your desire, and thank God who has thus called you to His service." Beger stood petrified with amazement, for Philip could not have known his wish but by divine revelation; and he could scarcely command strength to stammer a few words in reply. He ran eagerly off to the Minerva, and reached the church just as Fra Peter Martyr was coming back from the funeral. He then related what had happened, as clearly as his emotion would allow him, and added: "I have found, like the woman of Samaria, a man who has revealed to me all the secrets of my heart." Thereupon the Frate embraced him, and said: "I know well enough what F. Philip is; and now you need never doubt more." A few days later Beger was admitted into the order, and on the 11th November of the same year he received from Fra Antonio Brancuti, the Roman provincial, the habit of holy religion at the high altar of the Minerva. Several of Philip's spiritual children were present, and a great concourse of people. When Gallonio wrote the life of our saint, Beger was still living, so that from delicacy he says of him no more than that he was an excellent preacher.

The other fact I will relate was attested as a prophecy of the saint in the process of his canonization. Among the many who entered the Congregation of the Oratory was a certain young man full of fervour, most obedient to Philip, by whom he was greatly beloved; and, above all, detached from his family and from the world. Now it happened that in 1580 he fell ill, and,

without asking the opinion or advice of any one, he made up his mind to go back to his own country for change of air and to regain strength; and he decided further on taking with him a friend of his, who was also just recovering from some illness. He then told Philip his intention, but the saint very decidedly refused to give him permission to go. The young man, however, insisted and entreated so earnestly that Philip's gentle heart yielded at length, but with very manifest reluctance. On the eve of their departure Philip said to one of the fathers of the house: "Two are going, one only will come back. This young man will have his own way and go back to his family; he will return to the Congregation no more." And so it came to pass.

These facts, and very many others which are related by Bacci, not only spread the fame of Philip's sanctity throughout Rome, but greatly increased the love and the veneration in which he was held by the congregation. The longing to have him in the house with them grew stronger day by day, the rather that Philip was now growing old, and had been, notwithstanding the vigour of his constitution, several times very near death. In the year 1583 Philip was drawing near his seventieth year, and still no entreaties could prevail on him to come and live at the Vallicella. They tried every means in their power, but Philip's modesty and humility resisted or evaded them all. And then it would appear that he had at that time some trials at S. Girolamo, and these he valued too greatly to leave them. We read in Gallonio that Philip said to the fathers who were urging him anew to leave S. Girolamo, that of himself he would never quit it, because he would never run away from the Cross. When the fathers saw that

neither prayers nor entreaties availed, they cast about for some other means of gaining their end. Among the many cardinals who greatly loved Philip and his congregation was Donato Cesi, a man of great piety and worth. To him then they went, and implored him to use all his great influence to induce Philip to come to live at the Vallicella. They had suffered too much and too long from his absence, they said; and the happiness and welfare, perhaps even the life, of the Congregation, imperatively required the presence of its head. Why was it, they asked, that Philip could be so gentle and condescending to all others, and take such pleasure in contradicting and grieving his own sons, who loved him? What was the use of gathering together such a congregation in the Vallicella, if he who was its life and soul stood afar off? The Cardinal entered at once into the views of the fathers, and lost no time in mentioning them to the Pope; and the result was, that Philip received a formal command from the Pope to leave S. Girolamo immediately, and to take up his abode at the Vallicella with his sons, and there to remain till his death. Philip had stood out for years against all arguments, all entreaties, and all persuasions; but he said not a word when he received the Pope's command. He obeyed at once, and removed to the Vallicella on the 22d November 1583, when he was approaching the seventieth year of his age. The twelve years he continued to live at the Vallicella may be regarded as the old age of our saint, but we shall find them bright and fresh with all the vigour of youth, and fruitful in all good works. They were years of inestimable value, for it was in them that he impressed so deeply on his congregation the image of its beloved and marvellous founder.

The day on which he left S. Girolamo was to Philip a day of bitter regret and sorrow. He would never give up the key of the little room which was all hung around with memories so dear; and from time to time he delighted to return to it, and would spend some hours in it. He would also send some of the fathers there, and thus by degrees they all came to hold it in great veneration. He had clung to his little cell from his love of humility, and therefore he resolved that his leaving it should be marked by an act of extraordinary humiliation. He set out from it in long procession with several of the fathers; one gravely carried an earthen pipkin, another a porringer; a third bore a kettle, and another a spit; while a fifth carried on his shoulder a frying-pan, and others other poor utensils of Philip's kitchen. And thus they went slowly and sedately from S. Girolamo to the Vallicella, amidst the laughter and the jeers of those who did not know Philip and his ways.

It is an indication of Philip's spirit that he left his cat in his cell at S. Girolamo, that she might serve as an occasion of continual mortification to himself and to others, and she served his purpose well. He would bid now one and now another of his disciples, often men of great learning or high rank, to take the key and go to S. Girolamo to see how the cat was, and take her some food, and bring him back word whether she was comfortable and contented. And when they came back he would ask, even in presence of cardinals or other great personages: "Ah, so you have been to see my dear cat? What nice dinner did you take her? Is she well? Does she look happy and comfortable? Did she eat her dinner with a relish?" With these and the like devices he

strove to break down and destroy pride in those around him, and to get himself looked upon as a foolish old man, or at least to draw a veil around the brightness and the beauty of his holiness.[1]

Of the life Philip led in the Vallicella, and of what he did to perfect the Congregation, we shall speak presently. Gallonio gives us this sketch of it. He says that at the Vallicella, Philip did not give up the solitude he loved, but lived much as he had lived at S. Girolamo. He chose a room in the furthest and highest part of the house, that he might more easily and without disturbance give himself to contemplation. He took his food alone, and it was scanty and poor; and he would have no one to wait on him. When he was summoned by the sacristan to say mass in the church, he left everything and obeyed at once, leaving thus an example to his children. When getting ready to say mass, he would say: "Give me the oldest and worst vestments you have; the good ones are not for me." He would stay all the morning in the church, hearing confessions and gladly giving communion after the various masses. He governed the house with marvellous charity and prudence, loving all who lived in it more than ever father loved his son. Towards all he showed himself unutterably considerate and gentle. As the memory of those years comes back on Gallonio, he exclaims: "O how light he made the yoke of Christ to us by his winning tenderness! O how wondrously he gained the hearts of all his spiritual children, so that he could do with them whatsoever he pleased!" Such was Philip in the early days of his life at the Vallicella. His work went

[1] The biographers of the saint relate with evident feeling that this memorable cat survived for six years to render Philip this service.

on broadening and deepening, while he alone seemed to be altogether unconscious of change, and his one pre-occupation was to live and work in lowliness and poverty, unregarded and unknown.

In this same year Philip wrote another letter to his niece, the nun of whom we have already spoken; and of this letter we will give some few extracts which appear to us valuable for the instruction they contain, and for the light they reflect on the character of our saint. Speaking of avarice he says: "The mole is a blind animal which abides always in the earth; it eats earth and burrows in earth, and is never satiated with earth. And such is the avaricious man or woman; women are by nature avaricious. And what a revolting thing is avarice! A man has received so much from God; He has given him, besides his being, and all created things from the angels downwards, His own Son. The sweet Christ, the Incarnate Word, gave Himself to us, for all things needful to us, even to the hard and shameful death of the cross, and then gave Himself to us in a Sacrament, as at first He left heaven, humbling Himself to become man for us; and on the cross He was stripped of His garments, and shed His precious Blood, and His soul was separated from His body. All things created are open-hearted and liberal, and show forth the goodness of their Creator; the sun pours abroad light, and fire gives out heat; every tree stretches forth its arms and reaches to us its fruit; the water and the air, and all nature, declare the bounty of the Creator. And we, who are yet His living images, we do not represent Him, but with base degeneracy deny Him in our works, however much we confess Him with our mouths. Now, if avarice is a monstrous thing in any man, what is it in a religious who has made a

vow of poverty, and stripped himself of everything for the love of God! We must, at whatever cost of pain, get rid of this foul pestilence of avarice; nor shall we feel the pain if we seriously reflect that when we have laid aside this sordid covering of our soul, we shall be clothed with a regal and an imperial garment. I mean not only that we must despise gold and silver and pleasure and all else that is so prized by a blind deluded world, but that we are to give even the very life we love so much for the honour of God and the salvation of our neighbour, having our hearts ever ready to make this sacrifice, in the strength of Divine grace."

Not less striking are these words on obedience: "Greatly love holy obedience, and put this before and above every other thing, and never take anything to your own use unless it has been signed and sealed to you with the blessing of your Superior. Together with obedience love prayer; but carefully remember that while you love and desire prayer and holy communion with the utmost affection of your heart, you must be always ready to leave either or both at the call of obedience. Regard holy obedience as a true prayer and a real communion; for you must not desire prayer and communion for the sake of the sweetness of devotion you find in them—that would be seeking yourself and not God—but that you may become humble and obedient, gentle and patient. When you find these within you, then you will gather the fruit of prayer and communion, and above all, you will live in peace with all."

Our saint goes on to speak at length on the blessedness of peace in religious communities, and concludes his letter thus: "If the devil finds in a convent union and peace, he dreads this unruffled calm more than all

other exercises of the spiritual life without that bond of charity which should always hold closely together the souls of the sisters in a good community. And this I will show you with an example. If there were a great host of many armed men drawn out to battle with another valiant host; and if that first army were divided among themselves so that one soldier fought with another of the same host, do you not see how easily they would be overcome by their common enemy, while one was fighting with another, and neither obeying captain, or colonel, or general? But, if they were at peace with one another, and military discipline were kept, and all together fought as one man against the enemy, do you not see at once what terror they would strike into their opponents, how much stronger they would be thus, and how much nearer to victory? And hence our adversary the devil, who is unceasingly making war on us that he may gain possession of our souls, is always seeking to divide us, to stir up strifes and contentions, envyings and factions amongst us; because he knows that, while we are wrangling with one another, he can step quietly in and conquer us, and lead us away captive, or slay us, or rout us in disorder. Union and peace make up together the weapon of finest temper, and most dreaded by our foe; for God establishes His reign with the united and the peaceful, and, when He goes forth before us to the battle, who then can be overcome? Take great delight in the life of holy community; shun all singularity, take heed of purity of heart, for the Holy Spirit dwells in pure and simple souls, and He is the great Master of prayer, and makes us to dwell in that abiding peace and gladness of heart which are as a foretaste of Paradise; while anger, discord, and bitterness abiding in the soul are as a fume from hell. God

give you grace that you may so gather yourself up into His divine love, and enter so deeply through the Wound of the Side into the living Fount of the God made man, that you may deny yourself and all self-love, and never more find a way to come out thence. And there, within that Wound, remember me, and pray for me, a wretched worthless sinner."

But while Philip devoted himself with such loving wisdom to guide and perfect pious souls, his heart was always yearning with love towards sinners. If at times he showed himself severe and exacting with the good, to sinners he showed only the overflowing tenderness of his charity. And thus, rather than with argument or rebuke, he brought into the fold of Christ many protestants, and even Jews. Towards the close of the pontificate of Gregory XIII. we come upon a conversion of this kind, the circumstances of which are too instructive to be omitted, for they show us what means were, in Philip's judgment, best fitted to win back protestants to their mother the Church. There was at that time a noted heresiarch of noble birth, whose name was Jacopo Palæologo. He had been a Dominican, and, on his apostasy, had begun stealthily to sow the seeds of his heresy in Rome. When he found himself in danger of discovery he made his escape to Austria, where he contrived to ingratiate himself with the Emperor Maximilian; and, under the shelter of his protection, he began to preach his heresy openly, and perverted many persons in Germany, and especially in Bohemia. He was a learned man, spoke several languages fluently, was well versed in Greek, and had considerable knowledge of Holy Scriptures, the Fathers, and scholastic theology. He had studied for many years in various convents of Dominicans, and had even

been a professor of theology at Bologna. But his genius and his varied learning only precipitated his fall; he was inordinately proud, and vain of his powers and gifts, and especially of his alleged descent from the Greek imperial family. He soon cast aside his vow of chastity, although he lived unmarried with the woman whom he called his wife. He was living without restraint and in peace in Austria, when the Emperor Maximilian died in the flower of his age, and was succeeded by Rodolph, the first king of Hungary. The new Emperor was less indulgent than his predecessor; and, as Fra Jacopo Palæologo continued to disseminate his heresy, he had him arrested and sent to Rome, to be tried and punished as a heretic and an apostate friar. But the Pope so eagerly desired the conversion of the wretched apostate that he directed many of the most learned theologians of Rome to confer with him, and, amongst others, the celebrated Cardinal Bellarmine. But neither the genius, nor the virtues, nor the prayers of this great and holy man availed to shake Palæologo; he persisted in denying the Divinity of our Lord, and in defending the sanctity of what he called his marriage. His heart was darkened and his eyes blinded by pride and sensuality, and argument rendered him only more obstinate in his errors and his sin. Thereupon the judges appointed by the Pope, considering the invincible obstinacy of the heretic, the absence of all hope of bringing him to repentance, and the fact that he gloried in having perverted a great many persons in Germany, Austria, Hungary, and Bohemia, ended by condemning him to death, in conformity with the prescriptions of both the canon and civil law of the time. Fra Jacopo, who had hitherto behaved with haughty arrogance and insolence,

was struck with dismay at his sentence, but still refused to humble himself.

During all this time, Philip, who so greatly loved the Dominicans, was pierced to the heart by the apostasy and licentiousness of this degenerate son of S. Dominic, and especially by his impenetrable obduracy of heart. He wept bitterly over the ruin of a soul so richly gifted, over the great scandal of its fall, and over the sorrow and anguish of an order so dear to him. And at length he felt constrained to do what he could to bring this wandering sheep back to the fold, and, as was his wont, he put his trust in the irresistible might of charity. It was clear that discussion and argument were powerless, when a man of the stamp of Bellarmine had found them unavailing; and even human prudence counselled as a last resource an effort to reach the heart of the wretched apostate. He went to see Palæologo, and spoke to him with such tenderness of affection, such simplicity, and such unction, that the poor heretic was quite overcome and burst into tears, saying: "At last I have come upon a man after God's own heart, who announces the Gospel in all its simplicity. O why did I not know him sooner? I should not then have found myself in this miserable strait." Philip then took his leave for the time with words of gentle sympathy, leaving in the heart of Palæologo a germ which might, by the grace of God, spring up and bear fruit in its season.

Meanwhile as Fra Jacopo had given no sign of repentance, the ministers of justice proceeded to make preparations for executing the sentence pronounced. The saint was told one morning, while he was in his confessional, that they were already leading the criminal to punishment in the Campo di Fiore. His heart was

moved within him with a great compassion, and he ran off hurriedly to meet the procession of justice in the Strada del Pellegrino, before it had reached the place of execution. He made his way through the crowd, pushed the guards aside, threw his arms around the neck of the unhappy heretic, embraced him tenderly, and besought him to show mercy to his own soul by abasing his pride before God and Holy Church. While he was thus pleading with Palæologo, they reached the Campo di Fiore, and the ministers of justice were proceeding to bind their prisoner to the stake. Then Philip, urged by the vehemence and impetuosity of his charity, bade them stop and delay the execution awhile. And such was the reverence Philip inspired in Rome that none resisted him; all obeyed his command as if he were Pope. And then Philip spoke with such marvellous power and unction that his words at length touched the heart and reached the mind of the Frate, and he was changed into quite another man; he mounted upon a platform, and, to the amazement of the crowd, made a public profession of the Catholic faith, recanting all his heresies, and expressing his detestation of them and sorrow for them.

The tidings of this wonderful change soon reached the Pope, who commanded that at Philip's request the life of the Frate should be spared, but that by way of precaution he should be led back to prison and there remain for a time. He further granted him, also by Philip's desire, a considerable sum of money in addition to the allowance made him by the Holy Office for his support. This money the saint always took him with his own hand; he visited him almost daily to confirm him in the faith, and even heard his confession. In

order the more effectually to break down his pride and touch his heart with compunction, Philip made him read the lives of the B. Giovanni Colombini and Jacopone of Todi, two saints of singular simplicity and spotlessness of life. He said, and often repeated, that while genius and learning are undoubtedly of use in the conversion of such persons, the end is often more effectually and sooner reached by disclosing to them the purity and the beauty of the lives of the saints, than by the most learned arguments. But the pride of Palæologo, though defeated for a time, was not slain, nor can we now know whether his humiliation was ever sincere. The heart of man is an unfathomable deep, full of mysteries which are dark even to himself. Two years later he relapsed, and was again judged and condemned. Even then he did not die as a heretic; he again publicly renounced his errors and deplored his blindness, and he was by Philip's command assisted to the last by Baronio and F. Bordini. God grant that this tardy repentance may have been sincere and availing! While Philip was to the last so gentle and affectionate in his conduct towards Palæologo, he could never feel confidence in his perseverance, and was often heard to say: "I was never over-pleased with that man's conversion." He thought him ill-grounded in the faith, vacillating in character, and perhaps not altogether sincere; and yet what wealth of patient charity he lavished on him!

With like charity he brought many Jews into the Church of Christ, and his biographers relate some of these conversions with great minuteness. And we may learn from them that he regarded the miracle of the conversion of a sinner or a misbeliever to God as, in a very special way, the effect of prayer. He seldom or

never argued with the Jews; he showed them that he loved them, and he prayed without ceasing.

The first of these conversions dates back to the earliest days of Philip's priesthood, if not to the time when he was only a layman. He went one day to S. John Lateran with Prospero Crivelli, a nobleman of Milan, who had a Jew with him. On entering the church the two Catholics genuflected to the Blessed Sacrament, while the Jew stood erect with his back turned to the altar. Philip was grieved, and turning to him said with great gentleness and kindness: "O worthy sir, join at least with me in this prayer: 'If Thou, Christ, art true God, grant me the inspiration to become a christian.'" The Jew replied that he could not say these words, because they would imply a doubt of his own faith. Philip did not chide him or argue with him, although he was skilled and dexterous in controversy. He turned to those who were standing by, and said with great certainty of confidence: "I beg you, pray to God for this man; he wants nothing else to become a christian;" and so it came to pass.

On the vigil of S. Peter and S. Paul, of what year we know not, Marcello Ferro, one of the most loved of the saint's spiritual children, was walking before vespers under the portico of S. Peter's. There he fell in with two young Jews, and began to talk to them of our holy faith, and in particular of the two great apostles, who had both been Jews. The conversation lasted for some time; and seeing that they listened to him with courtesy and interest, he invited them to go with him some day to see F. Philip. This they did, and as soon as Philip saw them he embraced them as was his wont, and showed them so many affectionate attentions, that they were quite delighted with him, and for some

months went to see him almost every day. Nothing is said of any argument or discussion; Philip would convert them by making them feel his great charity, and by speaking of God and of His infinite goodness. At length they disappeared and came no more, and Philip begged Marcello to try in every way to find out the two youths who had become so dear to him. Marcello soon found out where they lived, and on going to the house saw their mother, and inquired with some anxiety how her sons were. She answered that one of them was very ill, and almost at the point of death. Marcello, who had the spirit of S. Philip in his heart, was deeply grieved, and asked the mother to let him see the dying youth. She made no opposition, and even begged Marcello to try to induce him to take some food, for he absolutely refused to take it from her. And, in fact, the young Jew was much pleased to see Marcello, and readily ate whatever he gave him; and Marcello contrived to whisper into his ear: "F. Philip sends you his remembrances, . . . don't forget that you have promised him that you will become a christian." The young Jew showed signs of great joy, and eagerly replied: "I do not forget it, and I will do it if God gives me life." Marcello related to Philip all that had passed, and the saint answered quietly: "Don't doubt, we will so aid him with our prayers that he will be converted." And as Philip said so it was. The young man soon recovered his health, and together with his brother returned to Philip, and under his guidance both became christians.

During the pontificate of Gregory XIII. Philip had the consolation of bringing to the faith of Christ a Jew of one of the wealthiest families of Rome. As he continued on terms of familiar intercourse with his father,

the Pope expressed to Philip a fear that his faith might suffer some injury; but Philip answered confidently: "Holy Father, I let them see so much of each other, because I feel a sure conviction that the father will be converted by means of the son." And not very long after, the father went to see Philip, and under his guidance became a christian.

And here we may fitly record some events which took place, indeed, after the death of Pope Gregory, but are closely connected with what has been just related. The convert last mentioned had contrived to get out of the Ghetto, and from the power of the Jews, four nephews of his, whose father was dead, and one day he took them with him to see Philip at the Vallicella. Philip caressed them and made much of them, but did not say one word about religion for some days. At length, one evening he asked them to commend themselves to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that He would inspire them to know which was the true faith. And he added with unusual emotion: "and to-morrow I will pray for you in my mass, and do holy violence to God." Then, turning to those who were standing near, he said: "To-morrow during my mass they will say *yes*." The next morning came, and found the four young Jews more reluctant than ever to become christians, and they even disputed for a very long time with several persons with great vigour and obstinacy. But while Philip was saying mass a sudden and complete change came over them; they ceased disputing, and joyously requested to be made christians. Their mother and their other relations tried with endearments, entreaties, and threats to restrain them, but to no purpose. The Pope himself, Clement VIII., baptized them all with great solemnity at S. John

Lateran, and assigned to them the names of Alexander Augustine, Hippolytus, and Clement.

In the month of September, and before their baptism, the second of these youths, who was afterwards called Augustine, fell dangerously ill of fever while they were living in the Vallicella as catechumens. The judgment of the physicians was altogether unfavourable, and his death was regarded as imminent. When Philip heard this he went at once to see him. He sent every one out of the room, and then laid his hand on the forehead and breast of the sick youth, his heart bounding the while as it was wont to do at times of great spiritual fervour. He then prayed for him, and obtained from God his perfect and rapid cure. That same day one of the physicians, Girolamo Cordella, who came to see him again after dinner, found him quite free from fever and without any symptom of disease of any kind. He could not at first believe his senses, for he had left his patient in the morning at the point of death, and now found him perfectly cured. Then he told F. Consolini that a very great miracle had been undoubtedly wrought before their eyes. In the street, as he was going away, he fell in with Gian-Battista Martelli, a countryman and friend of his, and told him of the astounding fact which he had that day witnessed. He said that when he saw the young man he thought at first that some one else had been put into his bed, he was so entirely changed in condition and look, and that he was at length convinced that he had been instantaneously and completely cured while Philip was praying for him. Cordella could not refrain from relating the miracle wherever he went, and declaring that Philip was a great saint. In the evening of that same day Philip went to see the young Jew again, and said to him: "My son,

you were undoubtedly at the point of death; but I would not have you die, lest your mother should say that we had killed you." This Agostino Boncompagni, whom the saint thus restored to health, became one of his most devoted sons, was admitted into the Congregation, and lived a life of great virtue and edification to all.[1]

Nor did the matter end there. When these four youths knew by experience the sweetness of the yoke of Christ, they felt a yearning desire to see their beloved mother a christian. They had recourse with great confidence to Philip, who began by getting her placed in the family of a pious Roman lady whom he knew, Giulia Orsini, Marchesa di Rangone. In their eagerness her sons wished to see her a christian at once, and entreated Philip to bring this about by his prayers; but the saint said to them: "She will not be converted just yet, and it is better for you that it should be so; but she will be converted before very long, with much greater fruit to herself and to others." And so it proved; for within four or five years the mother received from God the grace to know and embrace the true faith, and drew after her into the Church at least twenty-four persons of her kindred. These two conversions may suffice to set before us the method employed by Philip to obtain them from God.

And now, before concluding this chapter, we must turn to another event of great importance. Two years had not quite passed away since Philip took up his abode at the Vallicella when it pleased God to take from him the great support he had found in the confidence and affection of Gregory XIII.; the Pope died in April 1585, in his 84th year, and after a very short

[1] See the manuscript Life already referred to.

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illness.[1] He had been a great Pontiff, but greater even as Pope than as temporal prince; he eagerly desired the thorough and universal reformation of the Church, and he did very much to bring it about. He strove to reform the life of the Church by charity; and it deserves to be recorded that he spent more than two millions of crowns in the relief of the poor, and another million in providing marriage portions for poor girls. He aimed also at renovating the Church by science, drawn from the fountains of faith and conscience and right reason. He promoted serious studies of all kinds, and Baronio calculates that he spent more than two millions of crowns in supporting and aiding poor students. He founded twenty-two colleges of Jesuits, and covered with seminaries almost the whole of Christendom. It was he who gave such great increase and renewed life to the celebrated German College in Rome, assigning to it an annual income of ten thousand crowns from the *Camera Apostolica*, besides the Apollinare Palace, and the revenues of S. Stefano on the Cœlian Hill. He founded the English College, and even succeeded in establishing a college for Greeks. He fostered and aided in various ways the various orders of religion; he was most careful and even scrupulous in the choice of bishops; and he applied himself with singular gentleness, and with anxious and unremitting care, to introduce into ecclesiastical discipline all the reforms decreed by the Council of Trent. His name is widely known, in civil society as well as in the Church, for the great reformation in the Calendar which he effected, with the aid of Cardinal Sirleto and the most learned mathematicians

[1] He died a year later than the great S. Charles Borromeo, and the Roman people erected a statue to him on the Capitol.

and astronomers of Europe, by a Bull dated 13th February 1582.[1]

This great Pope not only loved Philip much—he held him in exceeding veneration, and gave him out to be a saint. And thus it seemed to him that it behoved the majesty of the supreme pontificate to bow before the majesty which clothes the saints of God. Whenever Philip went to his receptions the Pope welcomed him with rare and unwonted honours, and kissed his hands with devotion. He would never allow Philip to stand or to remain uncovered in his presence, but made him at once sit down at his side. Learned as he was, and experienced in the government of the Church, he never failed, in cases of peculiar moment, to seek the counsel of Philip. There was no favour which he would have hesitated to grant to his trusted and beloved Philip. He granted him the Church of the Vallicella, erected and approved the Congregation of the Oratory, enriched it with many spiritual privileges, and gave towards the building of the new church eight thousand golden crowns. We have seen what he did in the matter of Palæologus. To Philip he entrusted the very delicate inquiry into the spirit of Suor Orsola Benincasa; and he was sometimes seen accompanying our saint in his visits to the seven churches. When Gregory XIII. had given orders that all priests should wear a cotta in the confessional, in order to give more weight and authority to the sacrament of penance, we are told that when Philip next went to see the Pope he took care to have his cassock unbuttoned, and even a waistcoat which he wore beneath it. His Holiness was naturally surprised and asked the reason, and Philip answered: "I cannot endure even this waistcoat buttoned up, and

[1] Muratori, *Annali*, A.D. 1585, and many other authorities.

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yet your Holiness wants me to wear over my breast a cotta besides." The Pope then smiled and said: "I do not mean the order for you; *you* wear what you like."

It was natural, then, that Philip should lament the death of Pope Gregory, and it is fitting that we should ever hold in honour the memory of one so closely connected with him in the foundation of our Institute. And then, what would have become of the Oratory if Pope Gregory had not commanded Philip to foster it with his presence, his example, and his guidance! Well, then, does it become us, after the lapse of three centuries, to bless the name of the great Pontiff who constrained Philip to live with our forefathers in the congregation, so that he might leave to us firmly rooted and vigorous that tender plant of the Oratory which might otherwise have perished in its germ, or been smitten with incurable languor.

CHAPTER VII.

SIXTUS V.—PHILIP'S GOVERNMENT OF THE CONGREGATION—THE RULE.

On the 24th April 1585 a new Pope was given to the Church, and took the name of Sixtus V. He was of humble origin, and was born at Grotta del Mare, not far from Montalto. He became a Franciscan friar, and was noted for his piety, his vast genius, and his accurate learning. As Pope, he was so great and inspired such awe, that even after the lapse of three centuries he is still but imperfectly appreciated. His ardent love of justice made him stern, inexorable, and at times even cruel. And his activity and vigour of mind were so great that we cannot now understand how, in a pontificate of five years, he could overcome so many difficulties and do so much as he did. In less than a year he cleared the Pontifical states of the bandits and assassins who infested them. He enriched the Papal treasury, and was liberal and even munificent when he wished to be so. By his celebrated Bull *Immensa æterni Dei*, which was written with his own hand, he regulated and fixed the government of the Church and of the Papal states, entrusting the former to nine Congregations, and the latter to seven. He did so much to embellish Rome that at every step we find his name connected with some vast and useful work. He made very great efforts to defend the religion and the great-

ness of the French nation, menaced at that time by the Huguenots, by civil wars, and by the interested meddling of Spain. Such was the successor of Gregory XIII.[1]

When Sixtus V., as a simple Franciscan friar, was preaching the Lent sermons of 1552 in the Church of the Apostles, he was brought into relations with S. Philip, whose ardent longing for the renewal of discipline in the Church he shared; and there is great reason to believe that those relations continued when the friar had become a cardinal.[2] Before his elevation to the Papal throne, the Cardinal of Montalto lived a life of retirement, quiet, and study, far away from the turmoil of affairs, and as it were forgotten or overlooked; a life altogether congenial to Philip's tastes. And when he became Pope he continued to esteem and honour our saint. One instance of this is mentioned which is very significant, if we remember the inexorable severity of the Pope, and his refusal to listen to the intercessions of cardinals, princes, or even kings, on behalf of the guilty. It happened once that several vassals of a gentleman of Rome had conspired against him, and had come from different parts of the country to accuse him unjustly to the Pope. Philip became aware of this wrong, and spoke to the Pope with such earnestness on behalf of the innocent gentleman, that the charges against him fell at once to the

[1] Ranke, Hist. of the Popes, vol. i. p. 333, Ed. Bohn; and Hubner's excellent Life of Sixtus V. Both writers do justice to the singular grandeur of the character of this Pope, and dismiss with fitting contempt the unworthy inventions of Leti, which have been unfortunately repeated by subsequent writers down to our own day.

[2] "From that time Fra Felice Peretti (Sixtus V.) attached himself with a firm hold to the severe party just then beginning to gain ascendency in the Church; with Ignazio and Filippo Neri, who received the title of saints, he maintained the most intimate intercourse."—Ranke, Hist. of the Popes, vol. i. p. 336, Ed. Bohn.

ground. Still, we do not find Philip in such close relation with Sixtus V. as with Gregory XIII., or as we shall find him with Gregory XIV. and Clement VIII.

Their natural characters were, indeed, too strongly contrasted to make their intimacy probable. Sixtus V. was appalling the world by the rigours of his justice, and startling it by the boldness of his plans; whereas Philip was continuing that life of gentle charity and forbearance which so endeared him to the men of his own time. In addition to this we must remember that the Pope was so occupied with grave public interests of the Church, and with the government of the pontifical states, that he was unable to bestow much attention on the reformation of discipline and manners in Rome; while Philip, in his home at the Vallicella, was more than ever intent on this longed-for reform. Although he strove, according to his wont, to conceal himself from the eyes of men, and lived at first at the Vallicella as he had lived so many years before, secluded from the world, yet he could not always resist the entreaties of his spiritual children, nor the inner impulse of the Holy Ghost which was ever constraining him to be doing good. God leads thus with His hand, and in His ways, the humble in mind and heart, and they are always moving, though often unconsciously, towards the end He assigns them. They are like children, who are in full possession of their free will, while yet another is leading them on, rather by the heart than by the hand, in the way they should go.

When Philip came to live at the Vallicella, he became necessarily the visible Superior of the Congregation; he had been really Superior even while living

far away from his children in S. Girolamo, but he had never consented to take the title. At the utmost he was called *Father*, or *the Father;* a title which was not then given as a matter of course to all the members of the congregation.[1] He ruled the house rather by his example, and the singular goodness of his life, than by any very definite authority. On the other hand, the customs and the rules which had been observed in S. Giovanni, and partially even in S. Girolamo, were carefully and exactly observed at the Vallicella; and the first fathers of the Oratory were so filled with the love of God, and so watchful to obey every command, and even to satisfy every desire of Philip, that the want of a superior was hardly felt. Nevertheless, on the 19th June 1587, about four years after he had taken up his abode at the Vallicella, Philip was chosen or rather recognized by all the fathers assembled as Superior or *Preposto* of the Congregation. And, inasmuch as it was laid down by one of the rules in use at S. Giovanni, that the Superior could not remain in office more than three years, and might be once only re-elected for another period of three years, the fathers resolved to make an exception to this law in Philip's case by electing him Superior for life of the Congregation.[2] Philip at first absolutely refused to accept this office, and urged a great many reasons for his refusal; but he was at length overcome by the united and persevering entreaties of the fathers, and with great reluctance consented. It appears too, that he

[1] This title of Father given to all the priests of the Congregation did not come into use until a later period. It was first adopted by the Naples Oratory, somewhat in opposition to the wishes of the fathers of Rome. See the manuscript letters, preserved in the archives of the Naples Congregation.

[2] This rule was subsequently altered.

had even at that moment resolved to resign his office whenever he could do so, as he did in fact a few years before his death. As Superior, or Superior-general as he was then called, they continued to give him all his life to the end the loving name of Father. To them S. Philip was *the Father;* he could never be anything more. It was the only title which corresponded perfectly with his special type of sanctity, with the character he wished to impress on the congregation, and with the love with which all hearts clung to him.

And now that the saint found himself constrained by duty to govern the congregation more directly and formally than he had yet done, his first object was to fix and define its idea and scope with more exact precision. We have seen that while he greatly loved both monks and friars, and cheerfully lived in their midst, yet he had never thought of entering any religious order, or even of connecting his sons with the Barnabites and others, who took solemn vows of religion. He believed, or he felt, that he was called by God to make provision for the secular clergy, and for them alone he instituted his congregation. In the times of our saint the idea of vows was so bound up with that of a religious community, that even many of the first Oratorians of the Vallicella believed that the congregation was destined to develop into a religious order, bound like the rest by vows more or less solemn. But Philip held firmly to his original idea; and hence, as Gallonio tells us, he was no sooner elected Superior than he declared it to be his unalterable resolve that neither then nor ever should those who entered into the congregation be bound by vow or oath, but that they should live together as had been originally ordered. He added, moreover, that if any of them, in their desire

of greater perfection, had it in their minds to found a new Religion with vows, or to bind themselves together by promise or oath of any kind whatsoever, they were quite at liberty to leave the house, and enter into any other community they liked. None of those who decided to persevere in the Congregation of the Oratory were ever to presume to alter its original and essential form; but rather so to live, with no other bond than the gentle but mighty bond of charity, as to give out always *the good odour of Christ*, and by their lives and their preaching edify the Church of God. Without taking vows of religion, they were to be good and holy as the holiest and best religious. Nor was this all; there was one member of the congregation who thought that, for the sake of perfection, the fathers should at least give up to it their private property, and drew up a paper on the great spiritual benefit which would thus certainly accrue to the community. But when Philip heard of it he refused to listen to it. Though he was, as we have seen, so enamoured of holy poverty, yet he saw in the proposed renunciation of private property a certain connexion with the vow of poverty taken by religious, and therefore he wrote on the paper the words: *habeant, possideant*—the priests of the Oratory may have and possess.

After laying down this first fundamental principle of the congregation, Philip added some few new rules, and confirmed those which were already in use. But before giving the rule, he showed by his own example how a Superior should govern the congregation. Thus Gallonio tells us: "Philip always took most charitable care that no one should be overburdened with work, and that no one should grow idle and lukewarm from too much rest; he was always forecasting what he

could do to supply the wants of every one of his children to the utmost; he cared for all, loved all from his heart, and longed to see every one healthy in body and perfect in the spiritual life." And Bacci adds that Philip was wont to command little that he might be obeyed much; so that one day, when S. Charles Borromeo asked him how it was that he contrived to be so perfectly and so readily obeyed, he answered: "Because I command little." It might rather be said with truth that he never, or most rarely, commanded at all. His disciples remarked that he never said: "Do this or do that," but always said with great humility and tenderness of manner: "Please to do this; or if it seem to you inconvenient, I will do it for you." Or again: "I am disposed to lay this or that thing on you; what do you say? would you do it willingly?" In a letter from F. Germanico Fedeli to Tarugi, the original of which is preserved in the Congregation of Naples, I find a very characteristic trait of our saint. Writing on the way in which matters are decided in the Congregation by the majority of votes, he says of S. Philip: "The way he always held with us was this: he would tell us what he wished, and if there was any discussion he would then sacrifice his wish to that of the others."

Although Philip spoke sparingly, and commanded more sparingly still, there are many lessons given by him to his children in these early days of the Oratory which breathe the true spirit of wisdom and charity; not subtile or far-fetched, but such as recall to us that simple and profound teaching which is the hidden treasure of the wisdom of the Gospel.

These lessons remind us at once of that school or method of christian perfection of which I have already

spoken at length; but while they reflect and exhibit its spirit, they are somewhat more directly addressed to his own sons, and we therefore put them on record with a singular delight. One day the holy Father was gently urging the members of the congregation to the practice of the obedience he deemed so precious, and he added: "Obey at once the signal which calls you to community duties, and leave off everything else for them." He greatly disliked singularities in conduct or manner. He would have the fathers say mass every day, but he warned them against lengthening out their mass more than was usual, for the sake of their own devotion or fervour; there must be in them nothing singular, or different from other priests. He said a father of the Oratory must say mass when he is called, without having time, or altar, or server of his own. He said that the disobedient, of whose amendment there was little hope, should be dismissed from the congregation at once, lest the peace of the whole house suffer; for without peace amongst ourselves, he said, we shall never do anything good. We find it written with his own hand: "He amongst us who cannot go on without making a disturbance, either about the meals, or the work in church or elsewhere, had far better ask permission to leave the congregation as soon as he can; otherwise, after the first or second offence, his dismissal will be given him. My fathers, I am most firmly resolved not to have in the house men who will not observe the few rules, and do the few duties, assigned them." Philip always wished that the fathers should be as cheerful as possible, for he said that, even in a priest, melancholy was hurtful to the soul; but he would not have immoderate or worldly mirth. He said often: "Never speak about yourselves

without real cause ; avoid the words : I said this, I did that." Sometimes he was heard to say : " Let every one of the fathers stay at home—that is, within his own soul. Let him weigh his own actions, and not run about to notice and judge the actions of others. Still less should he show himself off as doing more than others ; let him honour all the fathers, even those who are below him." He would have those who were confessors be much on their guard with their spiritual daughters, and very reserved and restrained in their manner ; and he bade them, as a general rule, not to alarm or terrify their penitents, but to be always tender and compassionate with them. And he used to add : " Seek always, O my sons, to gain souls to Christ with sweetness and love, condescending to them as far as you can, using every means to draw them to that love of God which alone can do great things." These, and such as these, were the lessons Philip was incessantly giving to his sons during the twelve years he lived at the Vallicella ; and while he gave them, it was seen that it was the love of God that put the words into his mouth, and he repeated them often that they might sink into their minds, and become the true, living, and abiding spirit of the Oratory. But invaluable as were his lessons, the fathers learned very much more from his example ; and hence they watched his every movement with eager affection, and deemed him the happiest in whom were traced most features of resemblance to their beloved master.

Philip thus governed the congregation by means of his example, his charity, and the lessons of perfection he gave ; but he had also certain rules which were subsequently gathered into a little volume and called, *The Constitutions of the Congregation of the Oratory.* These

rules were drawn up, as we have seen, from time to time, as they were needed; they were not a code devised beforehand, but they grew up out of long-continued customs, and as the result of experience. For many years they were not even written down; every father had them in his heart, and observed them with most scrupulous care. They were handed orally on from one to another; and the younger members learned them mainly from the example of the older. In finally deciding on them Philip prayed much, and took counsel with many learned and holy men, especially with the Cardinal della Rovere, Archbishop of Turin, who was in universal esteem as a man of singular sanctity as well as learning. To understand how these rules grew up, and what our saint thought of them, we have only to read the beautiful words which serve as a preface to them: "The Congregation of the Oratory was rather moulded and compacted by the example of S. Philip Neri, than governed by laws and rules. He had not, as other religious founders have, a special rule which served him as a guide and an appeal. For, that best of fathers, being wont to rule with paternal affection the hearts of all according to the dispositions of each, was satisfied with seeing his sons all inflamed with true piety, and from day to day more fervent in their contempt of all earthly things for the love of Christ. To this end he approved and confirmed, as coming from the Spirit of the Lord, all that his daily experience showed him to be acceptable to them in order to their advance in piety, the increase of their merit, and the acquisition of solid virtues. And in this way, so different from that of many religious institutes, he guided and led onward his congregation of secular priests; because, he was wont to say, that he was not in

any sense the founder of the Congregation, but that it had been formed and brought to perfection by the great and merciful God Himself." And then follows a brief summary of the things which had been observed from the beginning as by an instinct, or afterwards introduced and accepted by the Congregation, and thereafter always observed in it. They relate to the Oratory and to prayer; to the Church and to the Divine offices; the salutary use of familiar preaching and conferences; the election and duties of the Superior and the four deputies; to the admission of members into the Congregation and to their expulsion from it; to the formation of novices; to our principal observances; to our clothing and manner of life; and to the refectory and the common table.

The humility, which was the soul and life of Philip's holiness, would not allow him to write down the rules of the Oratory, and so long as he lived no one dared write them in his stead. It was not until seventeen years after his death—that is, in 1612—that the fathers began to think that it was well to commit to writing what had hitherto been handed on from one to another by constant tradition, what each father held in his heart, and embodied in his life. The moment was well chosen. Almost all the then existing fathers had lived in the Congregation with S. Philip; the oral tradition was still complete and strong, while in another generation it might be weakened or impaired. The task of writing the rule was entrusted to F. Consolini, who had lived on terms of most affectionate intimacy with the saint, and had been in his last years his most beloved and trusted disciple. F. Consolini had another peculiar qualification for reducing the rule to writing; he held in such veneration

every utterance of the saint, and every rule acted on by him, that to add to them or diminish from them in the very smallest particular seemed to him nothing less than a grave sin. He, therefore, took exceeding care to express Philip's idea and will in Philip's own words. And the rule thus written, and accepted by the whole congregation, was that same year formally approved by Pope Paul V., who manifested on all occasions his great love of the congregation, and enriched it with many favours.

If we examine more particularly these wise and gentle rules of our saint, we shall find in them a bright and steady light which may not only gladden and cheer his sons of the congregation, but serve somewhat for the guidance of all christians.

In the first place, then, the Rule of the Oratory embodies, and in various ways expresses, that humility which was so remarkable a feature in the character of S. Philip. And thus, it seems to me the needed and the fitting antidote to that pride with which the protestant reformation had infected and enfeebled both civil and religious society. For our rule magnifies humility and lays it down as the foundation of Oratory life.[1] Nor does the rule content itself with commending humility; it is itself humble; it never commands—it does not say: *do this or that*, but: *our fathers are wont to do this or that*. And this proceeds from another principle of action of our saint; that he never meant, as the rule itself states with great precision, that his laws should bind his sons under pain of sin, whether mortal or venial. The principle that there are to be in the congregation no vows of any kind is clearly laid

[1] *Tyronum nostrorum peculiare est amare nesciri*—"it is the distinctive mark of our novices to love to be unknown," cap. vii.

down and confirmed in the Rule; and it is even provided that if ever, in the course of time, the congregation should be divided in opinion on this principle, and a majority should wish to introduce into it vows of any kind, the minority which adhered to the rule should be recognised as the true Oratory, with all the authority and rights of every kind pertaining to the congregation. So the principle that the fathers are not to give up their private property is repeated and enforced in the rule, and it is expressly provided that they are bound to live in the congregation at their own expense. And, in point of fact, we know that from the very first the companions of S. Philip contributed from their own resources to the common expenses, each according to his means, as the saint in his prudence directed. And thus, in this respect, Philip renewed in his congregation the life of the primitive christians, who, even when they did not sell their goods, very often gave the produce and the fruit of them to the common stock. The prohibition of every sort of vow, the injunction not to give up personal property, the clear declaration that the observance of the rule does not bind the conscience under any kind of sin, the freedom allowed to all to leave the congregation when they feel that they can no longer live in it according to its rules, these are the chief points which determine the nature and character of the Oratory, and make it a true community of ecclesiastics. They separate it in its essence from the idea of the religious orders, and they embody and confirm the saint's idea of a congregation of free priests. Nevertheless, it was Philip's aim and resolve to give to his disciples the perfection of the religious life, and he very often said that though they were without the vows of religious, they were bound to be

as good and as perfect as religious. Nor was he content with saying this, and with enforcing it with the marvellously constraining force of his own example; he resolved to provide in the rule itself the means of attaining this perfection. And herein we see the full wisdom of this great saint, and the originality of the idea he embodied in his congregation.

We have seen that between S. Philip and S. Charles there were some few differences of opinion in regard of the type on which a congregation of secular priests should be moulded; and it is evident that S. Philip's idea was somewhat more monastic than that of S. Charles. Without in any way withdrawing his fathers from the jurisdiction of their own bishop, S. Philip drew out for them a plan of life more independent, more specialized and definite, and in some respects more monastic, than S. Charles would have wished. In regard of the means by which the sons of S. Philip may reach the perfection of religious, the chief, I think, are prayer, charity, and humility. The Oratory, which is a daily prayer in common, was meant to supply the place of the common recitation of the Divine office by religious proper; and S. Philip chose this prayer rather than the divine office, because he wished to unite in it both priests and men of the world. He thus made a great step towards getting at the laity, and finding a common bond of religious union with them. And he deemed this of the greater importance, that the laity were now becoming more generally cultured and instructed, and consequently exposed to great danger from the new conditions of life, scientific, civil, and religious, in the sixteenth century. The Oratory itself, as we shall see, offered Philip the means of combining prayer, the word of God, and the attractive grace of

Catholic worship. But it was on the spirit of humility that the saint relied most for leading his sons to the perfection of religion. If we read the rule with any care, we see that there is scarcely one point of it which does not aim and tend, directly or indirectly, to nurture holy humility. We see why it was that, without any vow of obedience, he required and obtained from his sons the most unlimited and implicit obedience. It was his idea that the obedience which is not constrained by vow must of necessity have its root in humility; and that it might thus be even more interior and meritorious than if compelled from without. And then, lastly, Philip wished that charity should be the soul and life of the congregation, so that he often compares and contrasts charity with vows, and says that what religious obtain by vows we are bound to obtain by charity. His idea of charity in the congregation was clearly this, that a glowing love of God should so detach the hearts of all its members from every earthly object as to bind them all inseparably into one. Then, love would take the place of the fear of sin and the fear of punishment; these have hardly place amongst us, as being ill-suited to the spirit of a congregation which is rather a well-ordered and holy household and family, than an institute strong with the strength of severe discipline and of vows.

In these points, in regard of which S. Philip wished to give a certain monastic air to his congregation, he had certainly in view the various orders of monks and friars around him, the new not less than the old. But, unless I am deceived, his thoughts reverted more naturally to the great Dominican order, with which he had been always more closely connected than with any other. The recollections of his boyish days at S. Marco

in Florence, and his familiar and constant intercourse with the Fathers of the Minerva, gave him a more intimate knowledge of the Dominican rule, and a greater affection for it. And thus, as S. Dominic united in his rule an active and apostolic life with the old monastic regulations which he transferred unchanged into his order, so S. Philip strove to unite with the apostolic life of free priests many of the rules and customs of the Dominicans. When he read in the preface to the Dominican rule: *our order is established especially with a view to preaching*, he was encouraged, if not induced, to prescribe that the Fathers of the Oratory should preach three or four times every day. In its hierarchy, too, and in its form, the Congregation offers many points of resemblance to the Dominican rule. Just as the friars of each convent choose their own Prior, so our fathers choose their Superior, who is more generally called the Father. All offices, even that of General, are assigned for a certain time amongst the Dominicans, and so they are in the rule of the Oratory. And as there is given to the Dominican Prior a council to assist him in the discharge of his office, so S. Philip directs that four fathers be chosen to aid the Superior in the government of the house. Even the provincial and general chapters of the friars are to some extent represented in the chapters of the Oratory, in which all the decennial fathers are gathered together to deliberate with the Superior and the deputies.

The main difference between the government of the Dominican Order and that of the Oratory lies in this, that the Dominicans, like all other religious orders, bind all their separate houses together into one organic whole; while the rule of the Oratory, with a greater resemblance to the old Benedictine rule, prescribes that

each house of Oratorians should be independent and self-governing; so that they may form rather so many distinct families bound together by charity than one universal family.[1] Hence our rule makes no mention of a Superior-general, nor of those general chapters which would follow from the concentration of the several houses into one body. It is probable that Philip's humility somewhat influenced this decision. A number of small families scattered over Christendom pleased him more than the prestige of one vast and wide-spread congregation. He saw, moreover, that if the several houses of the Oratory were thus concentrated into one Congregation, they would be almost inevitably less under the jurisdiction of their local bishops than befitted their character of simple priests living in community, without vows of religion. The priest, as such, belongs to his diocese, and receives life and guidance from his bishop; and therefore an institute of simple priests should relax as little as possible the ties which connect the individual priest with his diocese and his bishop, and should not impress on them that stamp of universality which belongs to the members of religious orders. It is not fanciful to suppose that the traditions of the communal life of Florence, so glorious and so dear to every Florentine, may have led him to prefer this kind of organization to any other. Just as we may suppose that the grand conception of the Spanish monarchy was present to the mind of S. Ignatius when he founded his great Company, so it may be that the little communes of Florence lay in the mind of Philip as types when he

[1] *Quælibet Congregationis domus vel familiæ nostræ formam imitata, se per se regat et moderetur.* Cap. iv. This rule was particularly referred to and approved in the Bull of Pope Paul V.

founded his Congregation of the Oratory. And it may be that the christian democracy which swayed the destinies of Florence until the times of the Medici, and was afterwards revived in the earlier days of Savonarola, gave to Philip's rule that flavour of democracy which is so perceptible in it; as, for instance, the provision that the Superior is simply *the Father, primus inter pares*, with nothing distinctive of his position, either in church, or at table, or in his room, or elsewhere,—the first where all are equal.

Another aspect of the rule is, that in framing it, Philip had before him the evils and dangers of his own day, and strove to redress them. He resolved on founding a congregation of secular priests, because the lives of so many priests, living each apart without the restraint and support of any common bond, were occasions of scandal and evil. All the memoirs of that time agree in saying that the churches of Rome and of other Catholic cities were almost abandoned to ruin in the beginning of the sixteenth century, and the worship of God fallen into neglect. Hence the rule of S. Philip aims manifestly at giving new life to divine worship; his sons were to say mass every day, and to be constantly in their confessionals; and the ceremonies of our holy religion were to be in every way ennobled and made beautiful, especially with the beauty and the subduing charm of sacred music. When he forbids his sons to erect in their churches any statues of the dead, we see that he wished to cleanse the holy places, and to put down the abuse which was turning them into museums of art and memorials of human state and pride.[1] He would drive away from the house of God everything that tended to defile it with its presence, or to lower its

[1] *Statuas mortuorum in Ecclesiis non permittant.* Cap. ii.

dignity; and he held in especial horror the school of art which would fill our churches with unseemly paintings and statues, profanely labelled with the names of our Blessed Lady and the saints. Throughout the early history of the congregation we trace the same zeal for the beauty and the gravity of the sacred ceremonies, and of sacred song, and of the house of God; and, thank God, that zeal has never died away or grown languid in our congregation.

But the especial aim of the rule of S. Philip was the entire reform and regeneration of preaching in the sixteenth century. In the beginning of that century it was feeble, wretched, and powerless; and this was undoubtedly one occasion of the protestant revolt. With but few noble exceptions the preaching of that day had three defects; it was pagan, it was vain, and it was marred and spoiled by wire-drawn subtilties and extravagant conceits. The serene and artless beauty of christian doctrine and morals was distorted and disfigured, and there was a famine of the word of God. If we glance at the sermons of the preachers then most in renown, we feel at once that sacred eloquence was all but extinct. When Cardinal Bembo was asked why he never went to hear sermons, he answered: "Why, what would you have me to do at a sermon? One hears nothing but the Subtle doctor wrangling with the Angelical doctor, till Aristotle steps in and parts them." Now this kind of preaching wrung the heart of Philip with grief, and, from his first coming to Rome to the day of his death, he set himself to oppose and to banish it, with great gentleness indeed, but with unrelaxing firmness. He opposed it by opening the way to the Holy Scriptures, the History of the Church, the lives of the saints, and the writings of the Fathers, as the

genuine sources of sacred oratory. He would have the fathers of the Oratory filled to overflowing with divine charity, and he prescribed to them a style of preaching, simple and fresh, without affectation or display, fitted to stir the affections to their depth. And he embodied the teaching of his own example for so many years in the rule: "Our fathers should adapt their preaching to the capacity of the common people, without in any way seeking the applause of the multitude . . . they should avoid all intricate questions and discussions, and everything that belongs rather to the schools than to the Oratory."[1]

It must not be concluded, however, that in the intention of S. Philip the sermons of the Oratory should be unstudied, and bare of the beauty which comes naturally from a fervent piety, from vigour of mind, warmth of imagination, and breadth and richness of culture. Tarugi was one of the most beloved disciples of S. Philip, and the saint always held him up as the finished model of the preacher after his own heart, the very type of an Oratorian preacher. Now Tarugi writes to S. Philip as follows, in regard of the sermons of Antonio Carli, a young Oratorian of Naples: "Messer Antonio Carli soared aloft into the heavens on that text of Holy Scripture: *servire me fecisti in peccatis tuis*—thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities—and produced a very great impression. But, while praising him for his depth of thought and fervour of expression, I bade him strive in future to devote two-thirds of his sermon to the direct and personal application of his subject. And he will do his best to follow my counsel, though I would not quarrel with a bit of theology well digested and clearly

[1] See Cantù, *Storia Universale;* Preludes of the reformation.

expressed, and even a few quotations from the Fathers, if brought in so appropriately and beautifully as he brings them in. For this good people of Naples like their food well seasoned and spiced with these delicacies, if we would get them to take it at all. . . . Yesterday I made Messer Antonio preach for once quite a scholastic sermon, but with much action and fervour; and this I did for the sake of some very curious people who like deep doctrine. And then I preached myself, to show them, that while I was willing to indulge their taste now and then, the aim of our Congregation was to speak to the heart; not that we did not on fitting occasions handle higher and more subtile matters, but that we wished to do so seldom, and as it were only of necessity."[1] We may conclude from this letter that the *producing a very great impression*, *speaking to the heart*, and even the *soaring high aloft* in commenting on Holy Scripture, form part of the idea of sacred eloquence as conceived by S. Philip and by Tarugi. They did not wish to banish true and solid eloquence from the sermons of the Oratory, but to restrain it within those bounds of simplicity, good taste, and sacred unction, which render it living and effective.

From what has been said it will appear clearly that the rule of S. Philip bears an impress all its own, and is unlike all others. Its idea is fresh and altogether original. Almost all the saints who flourished in the sixteenth century founded religious orders. S. Cajetan, S. Ignatius, S. John of God, S. Peter of Alcantara, S. John of the Cross, S. Teresa, S. Francis Caracciolo, S. Joseph Calasanctius, and others, were all founders of new Institutes; but in none of them was there any substantial change in the conception of the religious life as

[1] Manuscript letters, preserved in the Naples Oratory.

we find it in the thirteenth century, and signally in the order of S. Dominic. It is true that the new orders of regulars were brought into closer contact with the life of the faithful than the friars, but they did not touch the vows of religion, nor innovate on the received usages of the religious life. Philip, on the other hand, boldly gave his congregation a foundation entirely new. He first made the attempt to join together a life wholly sacerdotal, and free from vows, with the perfection of the religious state. And in this respect his institute is one of the boldest creations of the sixteenth century, in its great efforts at reformation. Its results and fruit are known only to the very few who have studied the history of the several congregations of the Oratory. True to the spirit of their father, their labours have remained for the most part hidden or but little known, like the influence of those christian families who are content to love God and do good to their neighbour, without making a noise in the world or drawing attention to themselves. One of the most real results of S. Philip's rule is unquestionably this—that all religious congregations founded in later years have inclined, far more than their predecessors, to the idea of the christian priesthood, and less to that of the cloistered religious. Thus the missionaries of S. Vincent of Paul reduced the solemn vows to simple ; while the Oblates of S. Charles, the Priests del Sacro Chiodo of Siena, those of the French Oratory founded by Cardinal de Bérulle, and others, did away with vows altogether, and aimed simply at gathering the secular clergy into communities, in order to their greater perfection in their state.

CHAPTER VIII.

S. PHILIP AND MUSIC.

It is written in the rule that the saint wished that his fathers, together with the faithful, should *rouse themselves to the contemplation of heavenly things by means of musical harmony.*[1] And since, as S. Thomas teaches us, the end and scope of all contemplation is divine love,[2] we may conclude that S. Philip wished us to use music mainly to elicit and increase within us that sacred love. And if we look carefully at the word *concentus* in the rule, we see that he had in view that harmony which results from the concord of many voices with instruments of music. He took the word *music* in its widest sense, and made use of both vocal and instrumental music, and of their blended harmony, to raise the hearts of men to God. And if we turn from the rule to look at the practice of our beloved saint, we find that he loved with a passionate love that eldest-born of the arts, and gave it a foremost place in his thoughts and plans. When listening to some rich and simple piece of music, his keen emotion would overflow in tears, so that during Vespers and Compline at the Minerva his eyes were seen to be swollen with weeping. In all the manifold exercises of the Oratory,

[1] *Musico concentu excitentur ad cælestia contemplanda.* Cap. i. *de Oratorio.*

[2] Summa Theol. 2. 2. q. 180, art. 7.

in the high functions at S. Girolamo, S. John of the Florentines, and the Vallicella, during the visits to the seven churches, amidst the blithe and devout troops of boys who gathered together on the heights of S. Onofrio, in his many recreations with the Dominican novices and others, music and singing had always a large and prominent part. Even in his visions and ecstasies Philip's soul was refreshed with the eternal harmonies; the souls he saw upborne into heaven were sped on their way with the voice of angels; just as Dante, when he would give some dim, faint conception of the blessedness of those whose pilgrimage is ended, represents them as enravished with the sweetness of the everlasting song. Our saint was profoundly convinced that there is in music and in song a mysterious and a mighty power to stir the heart with high and noble emotions, and an especial fitness to raise it above sense to the love of heavenly things. I shall therefore dwell at some length on the use Philip made of music; and the rather that in these our days we greatly need some master mind, to revive the knowledge and the love of good religious music, and give it back all its power to elevate and purify and refine the soul of man. Of the yearnings I have felt all along my life this has been the deepest; and hence, with S. Philip as my guide, I propose to call the attention of my readers to sacred music, and to its immense and perhaps unsuspected importance.

Philip's gentle, loving, and tender nature, together with his vivid imagination, disposed him from his youth to love music, and he found in it both the source and the nurture of all holy inspirations. It was this exquisite sensitiveness to all harmony which gave him that unutterable sweetness of expression, of speech,

and of gesture, which made him so dear to all. And it was this, too, that increased all through his life his capacity of the loftiest emotions of divine love. All artists and poets feel the mighty spell of music, and we cannot have followed Philip thus far without seeing that he was, implicitly at least, both poet and artist. The providence of God disposed the natural gifts and tastes of our saint to high ends, and sanctified them with the fulness of divine grace, and furnished him, moreover, with abundant opportunities of cultivating them. Philip lived in Rome throughout the sixteenth century, and was a priest already advanced in years when the very grave question of Church music was examined and decided by the sovereign Pontiffs, and that mainly under the influence of S. Charles Borromeo; and its difficulties were solved by one who was the disciple, the penitent, and the friend of S. Philip, the prince of musicians, Pier Luigi of Palestrina. Philip was, moreover, connected by ties of most affectionate friendship with another musician of great repute in his day, Giovanni Animuccia of Florence. He also admitted into the congregation, and greatly loved, F. Francesco Soto di Langa, a member of the Papal choir, and intrusted to him the direction of the music of the Oratory. And thus, through these three eminent masters of the great art, and especially through Palestrina,

> Who o'er the others like an eagle soars,

the life of our saint was intimately connected with the history of music in the sixteenth century, and with the reforms and advances it then made.

Amongst the earliest penitents of our saint was one eminent both in piety and in musical skill, the Florentine

Giovanni Animuccia; one of those rare souls who surprise and delight us with their simplicity, their faith, and their poetical tenderness and beauty. If we look at him simply as a christian man, we find him foremost amidst that throng of Philip's disciples and penitents who shone with so bright a light of perfection at S. Girolamo. Both he and his wife, Lucrezia Giolia of Siena, who was also a penitent of Philip's, gave to Rome for many years the example of every christian virtue. We find in the lives of our saint a particular account of the holy death of both, and of his presence with them at the last. They tell us, that although Giovanni had been all his life disquieted by scruples, he died in great peace; and that Philip prayed much for him after his death, and saw him in vision taken up a few days later into the bosom of God. Of Lucrezia, Gallonio relates that she was miraculously cured of a fever by Philip, and released from many and great temptations. These biographers mention incidentally one circumstance of their lives which should not, I think, be passed over in silence. In the early ages of the Church it was not uncommon to meet with christians who, even in the marriage state, felt called to a life of perfect continence. The life of S. Paulinus of Nola is a striking and touching instance. Now as Giovanni and Lucrezia became more fully possessed with the love of God they resolved to follow this high example, and to live together only to aid each other in the path of perfection.

Giovanni Animuccia was, besides, a musician of unusual skill, and was so highly esteemed in his art that we are told that even the mighty Palestrina did not *oust him from his nest.* Both these great men were devoted friends of our saint, and he availed himself of

the genius and devotion of both to enrich and perfect the music of the Oratory, on which he bestowed his unremitting and loving care. Animuccia had studied in Rome under that same Claudio Goudimel who was also the master of Palestrina, and who was probably not unknown to Philip, for in the archives of the Vallicella we find many unpublished musical compositions of his. Under his tuition Animuccia made rapid progress and rose into great repute, so that in 1553, in the pontificate of Julius III., he was chosen to be choir-master of the Vatican Basilica. This appointment is sufficient to show that he was regarded with great esteem in Rome, for it had been held up to this time by the great Palestrina himself, who was now promoted into the college of singers of the Papal Chapel. As befitted a true disciple of S. Philip, he looked on this office only as a means of acquiring greater perfection in his art, and of employing the pure and sacred charms of music to raise the souls of his hearers to God. A few years later he printed his first volume of Masses, and sent it out into the world with a preface which not only breathed the true humility of a child of S. Philip, but incidentally exhibits the prevailing faults of the music of the sixteenth century. "Amongst the musical compositions," he says, "which are now sung in the divine mysteries, there are some composed with such rare artistic skill that with their sweetness they move their hearers with marvellous delight. There are, nevertheless, some persons who not unnaturally wish that the words which are intended to excite their piety towards God should be more distinctly heard, and thus more clearly comprehended. For, they say, in many of these compositions the words are not so much embellished with song, as lost in the maze of runs and returns and

repetitions of the voices. And therefore I, being thereto urged by the judgment and counsel of these persons, have striven to adorn these prayers and praises of God with such singing as may not hinder the hearers from understanding the words, while, at the same time, they lack not such artistic beauty as may delight the ear. But that I have not succeeded in my endeavour will be at once apparent to those who are skilled in music and know its difficulties, and who at the same time know the insufficiency of my powers." [1]

But although Animuccia succeeded only partially in correcting the faults and abuses of the sacred music of his time, his efforts were all in the right direction, and endeared him still more to Philip; and we find him very early engaged in directing the music of the Oratory at S. Girolamo, and subsequently at S. John of the Florentines. As was then not uncommon, Animuccia was an accomplished singer as well as a good choir-master; and hence S. Philip made him head and chief of the singers of the Oratory, who were many in number, and greatly distinguished in merit. So we find that "Animuccia used to go every day to sing at the Oratory after the sermons, taking with him many of his companions." [2] Among these companions was that Sebastiano, the musician of Castello and much-loved penitent of Philip's, of whose holy death we have already spoken. Nor was Philip contented with having Animuccia at the head of his choir of singers; he incessantly urged him to compose pieces of sacred music for the Oratory,

[1] *Joannis Animucciæ Magistri Cappellæ S. Basilicæ Vaticanæ Missarum*, Lib. 3; quoted by Baini, in his memoirs of the life and works of Giovanni Pier Luigi da Palestrina. This beautiful life, which is now exceedingly rare, has been my guide in many parts of this chapter.

[2] *Notizia dei contrappuntisti e compositori di musica, di Giuseppe Ottavio Pitoni*, a manuscript quoted by Baini in a note to Tom. i. p. 365.

in order to set an example of the manner in which it might be most fittingly used to excite holy thoughts and affections.

S. Philip's Oratory was, in those days, one of the great centres of sacred music in Rome. His singers, as well as his composers, were always chosen from amongst the most celebrated men in the city ; and the Oratory offered to composers a new and a wider field for their art than even the great Basilicas and the Papal Chapel. Besides the Masses, the Psalms, and the Antiphons, which were all sung in the style of that time, there were sung at the Oratory a great many *Laudi*, motets, madrigals, and sacred songs, in the vulgar tongue ; and these gave free scope to composers to essay a simpler and more popular and stirring style of music. And then, these various compositions, which were all comprehended under the general name of *Laudi*, being sung in Italian, expressly that the people might more readily understand what they were singing, tended greatly to lead composers to avoid one of the chief faults of the music of the day. Animuccia set to music many of these *Laudi*, and two volumes of them were published. In the dedication of the second book, he says : "Many years ago, I published, for the consolation of those who frequented the Oratory of S. Girolamo, the first book of the *Laudi ;* in the which I strove to keep a certain simplicity which seemed to me befitting the words themselves, the character of that devout place, and the end I myself had in view, namely, the exciting the devotion of those who sang and of those who listened. But inasmuch as the said Oratory has, by the grace of God, gone on increasing, with great concourse of prelates and gentlemen of noblest rank, it has seemed good to me to increase in this second book the quantity of music sung in harmony, and the different parts

assigned to different voices; varying the music in divers ways, with words sometimes in Latin and sometimes in the vulgar tongue, sometimes with fewer voices and sometimes with more, with rhymes sometimes of one kind and sometimes of another, avoiding, as far as I could, to entangle myself in fugues and other inventions, so as not to darken the meaning of the words, that, by their own efficacy, aided by the sweetness of harmony, they might more gently sink into the hearts of the hearers."[1] Now, although Baini, who is a very competent judge, thinks that Animuccia's success was not very great, it is still pleasant and edifying to see the zeal and love with which he made his attempt. And, in what Animuccia says in the first book of his *Laudi*, of the simplicity with which he had written music which had no other end than to excite and feed devotion, we see at once the true disciple of him who wished that the sermons of the Oratory should be simple, the life of his disciples simple, and the melodies also simple which were to draw the heart nearer God.

Animuccia died in 1571, in the arms of his beloved Father Philip, and it pleased God to reveal to our saint that his soul was received into Paradise. That he left behind him the reputation of a good musical writer may be gathered from the notices of him by contemporary writers, and especially by Poccianti, who wrote a few years after his death. To do honour to the memory of one so dear to S. Philip and so closely bound

[1] The first book was published in 1565, by the heirs of Valerio and Luigi Dorici, and dedicated to S. Girolamo (S. Jerome), with the following verses:

Seque suosque tibi chorus, alme Hieronyme, cantus
Dedicat, ipse tua quos dat in æde pius;
Pro quibus in patria, fac, dulcis nomen Jesu
Audiat angelico dulcius ore cani.

up with the origin of the Oratory, I quote the words of the last-named writer, which are further interesting as a specimen of the style of writing against which our saint so strongly protested: "Giovanni Animuccia, brought up in the beauteous gardens of the nymphs, tasted the sweetest nectar of music, and thereof drank so deeply that he was deemed worthy to be chosen *Maestro della Capella* of the most sacred Vatican Basilica. He gave to the light innumerable motets and madrigals of wondrous sweetness; but above all celebrated is his Book of Masses, &c."[1] The death of Animuccia was a great grief to S. Philip. He left two nieces, wholly without provision; and our saint, with his large-hearted charity, took charge of them, giving them six hundred crowns, and providing for their maintenance until their marriage.

Philip had no difficulty in finding a successor to Animuccia; Palestrina gladly accepted the vacant charge, and we shall see to what perfection he brought the musical exercises of the Oratory, and how close and affectionate were his relations with our saint. But if we would understand the marvellous results of Palestrina's labours, and the influence of S. Philip upon them, we must first glance rapidly at the state in which they found the sacred music of the sixteenth century.

Together with the Church, and as its natural utterance, there came into being a new and unapproachably beautiful style of music, a grave, pathetic, and

[1] Michael Pocciantio Ord. Servorum B.V.M., *Catalogus scriptorum Florentinorum omnis generis*, &c. (Florence, 1589). The printed works of Animuccia are the following: First book of *Madrigals* for three voices, with some motets and spiritual madrigals (Rome, 1565). First book of *Masses*, for four, five, and six voices (Rome, 1567). First book of *Madrigals*, for four, five, and six voices (Venice, 1567). Book of *Magnificats* for four voices (Rome, 1568). Book of *Laudi*, with motets, psalms, &c., in Latin, and in the vulgar tongue, composed for the Oratory of S. Girolamo when S. Philip was living there (Rome, 1570).

soothing chant, full of expression and life, which bears the name of S. Gregory, who first reduced it to rule. It arose in the times of the apostles, as the instinctive expression of the faith and hope and charity of men who sang not merely for their personal delight, but for the glory of God. S. Ambrose says, in words of singular beauty: "Our liturgical chant is the chant of all nature; infants learn it from their mothers' lips; young and old instinctively raise it in the house of prayer." We know that the execution of this chant was in early times brought to great perfection, and displayed its full power and beauty. The chant was fast or slow, soft or loud, as the meaning of the words inspired the faith and the fervour of the singers. It is matter of deep regret that the tradition of this old liturgical song has reached us so mutilated and disfigured. Down to the middle of the thirteenth century it was like a limpid stream, ever fresh and pure and beautiful; but it was polluted and diverted from its course by the first rude attempts at harmony. In the days of S. Philip and Palestrina it had suffered greatly; much of it, says Baini, was mutilated through the carelessness of copyists; much was degraded by the caprice of the vain; and much had lost all its original meaning through the recklessness of the ignorant. And still, although we now possess only the disfigured remains of the ancient chant, the efforts of so many Popes and the genius of Palestrina have so far restored its early purity, that it remains the most genuine expression of religious feeling, and bears a stamp of grandeur, solemnity, and pathos all its own.[1]

[1] See Baini, tom. ii. p. 8, and the whole chapter; and Biaggi's introduction to the *Inni sacri tradotti e commentati* of Luigi Venturi (Florence, 1877).

The melodies of the Gregorian chant naturally served in the seventh century as the basis of the new art of playing the organ; and thus arose harmonized music, which was first figured towards the beginning of the eleventh century. For a very long time written music was unknown; it was the office of singers to know their melodies by heart, and to harmonize them at sight; and hence one set of singers would found on a given melody harmonies at once beautiful and religious, while others would degrade it with meretricious and profane accompaniments. Hence, during all those centuries we look in vain for the name of any composer of music; we hear only of singers celebrated in their day, whose work and skill died with them. The good singer was then a personage of far greater importance than in our days; and thus, when Dante meets, in his Purgatorio, with Casella, a simple *cantore*, he addresses him thus:

> . . . If some new law take not from thee
> Memory or practice of the song of love,
> Which used to quiet me in all my longings,
> Thee may it please to comfort therewithal
> Somewhat this soul of mine, that with its body
> Hitherward coming is so much distressed.

Towards the middle of the fourteenth century music began to be enriched with written compositions and figured harmonies, and from that time down to the Council of Trent and Palestrina, both sacred and profane music underwent many vicissitudes, which it does not lie within our scope to narrate. But amidst all the miseries of the sixteenth century there was a universal longing to reform every abuse in everything connected with the Church. The Council of Trent did not overlook sacred music, as we see in its decree

on the things to be observed and avoided in the celebration of mass.[1]

The faults which disfigured the sacred music of the time were two, both of them serious, and one of them fatal. Not that it was even then, as some think, light, effeminate, and ungraceful; that was the fault of the seventeenth century, when the use of the organ to accompany the Church chant became general.[2] In the sixteenth century, the first fault which dimmed the majesty of sacred music and impaired its effect was that, either through the carelessness of composers, or the number of musical artifices and conceits which overlaid the melody, the words that were sung could no longer be heard. Sacred music was thus degraded from its high office of raising men's hearts to God by giving additional force to the sacred words. And the second fault was, that melodies were introduced into the Church which had first served secular and profane uses. Thus the genial melodies of popular ballads which every one knew, of sonnets, lays, romances, and madrigals, furnished the theme of very many masses, and sometimes excited mirth in presence of the dread mysteries of the sanctuary. And so inveterate had this abuse become, that the composer who had the daring to stem it was despised as ignorant and worthless. These were the abuses for which a remedy was needed in the sixteenth century; that remedy was provided and applied with singular success by Palestrina.

[1] Amongst the things which bishops are required to banish from the churches under their jurisdiction we find: *musicas cas, ubi, sive organo sive cantu, lascivum aut impurum aliquid misceatur.*

[2] Until the seventeenth century the organ was used only for what were called the musical preludes, and occasionally to accompany the chanting of the psalms. It did not begin to be used with part singing until after the death of S. Philip and of Palestrina. Part singing without the organ was then known as *canti alla Palestrina.*

It was not enough to write pieces of sacred song with sparing use of popular musical artifices, and without admixture of profane and lascivious melodies; this would have failed to reach the root of the evil. What was wanted was this—that sacred music should be brought back again from the way of its wanderings, that it should be again used only for its proper and noble end, not only by reinstating in the churches the venerable Gregorian psalmody, but by making full and free use in the service of religion of all the newly discovered resources of the art. It was required that a style of music which had such power to please should be confronted and overcome by another style of equal power and beauty, but a beauty all spiritual and divine. The real reformer of sacred music should be one who could stir the heart with gladness and melt it into tears, but the sadness and the joy alike should tend to raise it above the world, and bring it nearer God. He should sway the affections at will, but he should render them pure and holy and heavenly; he should, by the stateliness of his melodies and the nobleness of his interwoven harmonies, raise the soul from the finite to the infinite, from earth to heaven, from the creature to God. To attain this lofty end the greatest musical genius would not avail alone; a man was wanted of the stamp of Palestrina, a man born for the music of the sanctuary, as was Michel Angelo for sculpture, and Raphael for painting. His serene and majestic soul, his teeming mind, his heart of trembling sensitiveness, his bright and sunny fancy, gave to his compositions an endless variety;[1] but all were alike full of nature, charm, and life; and each in its own

[1] In his life of Palestrina, Baini analyses these several varieties with great minuteness and care.

form expressed in their fulness the majesty and the beauty of religion.

What rendered Palestrina a master so consummate in his art was, undoubtedly, the fervour of piety which flooded his soul with light and warmth. And thus we come upon the share, a share so secret and mysterious, so beyond our power to determine with precision, which Philip had in the great musical reformation wrought by Palestrina. It is certain, that if the sacred flame of divine love with which our saint enkindled the heart of Palestrina had not found in it an inborn sense of the beautiful in voice and sound, it would have done nothing for sacred music. And, on the other hand, if Palestrina had not been from his boyhood led to feel the beauty of religion, to exult in hope of Paradise, to fear and to shun hell, and that with a thrilling joy and fear we can now but dimly apprehend; if he had not so passionately loved our blessed Lord and the Church; he might have done great things, but he would never have rendered sacred music a voice to our hearts so holy, so penetrating, so gladdening, so full of mystery and awe as he did. And thus S. Philip, who so tenderly loved and so watchfully cultivated the soul of Palestrina from his youth, who inspired him with the love of God, and held ever before him an example of boundless charity, and abiding converse with God; S. Philip, who gave him as a field for the cultivation of his gifts his own beloved Oratory, and whom he saw so often moved to tears of rapture as he listened; S. Philip, beyond all doubt, awakened to a higher and more fruitful life those germs of music which nature had sown in his soul. Just as a field, in its own nature fertile, may yet bring forth no fruit unless warmed by the sun and softened by the rain, so even the great soul of Pales-

trina might have done little or nothing on behalf of sacred music, if he had not fallen under the direction of one who, like Philip, knew how to put to their noblest use the genius, the poetry, the imagination, and the sacred fire with which God had so richly endowed him.

The influence of Philip on the genius of Palestrina was strongly reinforced by S. Charles Borromeo. The Council of Trent terminated its labours in 1563, and Pius IV., who was then Pope, appointed a commission of cardinals to give effect to the decrees of the council on the reformation of the discipline and usages of the Church. Among these cardinals was S. Charles, who was especially charged, in conjunction with Cardinal Vitelli, to effect the desired reform in sacred music. For the reasons already given, the task was a delicate and difficult one; and, moreover, both the Pope and Cardinal Vitelli took great delight in figured music, and shrank from excluding it entirely from the divine office, as was desired by the more rigid of the clergy. S. Charles himself was disposed to sacrifice figured music altogether, and to go back to the exclusive use of the old Gregorian chant, purified and reformed. It was therefore fortunate that he was the friend of S. Philip, who found such delight in music, and that he honoured and esteemed Palestrina almost as much as Cardinal Vitelli himself. And thus it came to pass that these two cardinals placed in the hands of Philip's beloved disciple the fate of the music of the Church. They commissioned him to write three masses by way of test, and on them depended the Church's decision. Palestrina set to work with tremulous emotion, and succeeded beyond his most daring hope. The third mass, especially, was pronounced to be unapproachable

in sublimity, simplicity, and beauty, and the cause of sacred music was gained for all time.[1] Cardinal Borromeo was delighted with it, and when Pius IV. heard it, on the 19th June 1565, he exclaimed: "These are surely the harmonies of the new canticle which S. John heard sung in the Jerusalem that is above!" and he applied to it, with a slight alteration, the lines of Dante:

> They render voice to voice in modulation,
> And sweetness that cannot be comprehended,
> Excepting there, where joy is made eternal.

This decisive triumph of harmonized music greatly gladdened S. Philip's heart; it was the music he had cultivated with such loving care at the Oratory, and the triumph was won by his own beloved disciple, and the friend of Animuccia.

Palestrina was thus recognised in 1565 as the great reformer of sacred music, and appointed composer to the Papal chapel; and this was the man who in 1571, at the full height of his glory, undertook the office of *Maestro di Capella* of S. Philip's Oratory. He was born at Palestrina in 1524, and came at a very early age to Rome. There he endeared himself greatly to Persiano Rosa, Philip's confessor, and to F. Angelo Velli, of the Oratory, both of whom were also natives of Palestrina. He would thus be naturally acquainted with Philip, who was still at that time a layman. Both loved music with intense passion; both were friends of Animuccia and other great composers of Rome; and the exercises of the Oratory were already at that early

[1] This is the mass which bears the name of Pope Marcellus; not, as was said in error, because it was written by desire of that Pope, but because Palestrina greatly venerated his memory. Of the eighty-seven masses left by Palestrina none surpasses this in beauty.

period a centre of union to the lovers of sacred music. Very few traces have been preserved of their intimate friendship. Piazzo says: "Pietro Aloisio (our Palestrina), a celebrated composer and restorer of music in the last century, was especially dear to S. Philip Neri for his pre-eminence in his art and his Christian piety.[1]

Cecconi, in his history of the city of Palestrina, writes: "Another memorable citizen likewise amazed the world with the rare endowments of his mind. This was Giovanni Pier Luigi, a man worthy to be held in remembrance not less for the piety he learned under S. Philip Neri, whose disciple he was, than for his transcendent skill in music."[2] And Petrini says, in his Memorials of Palestrina, that Pier Luigi had the great happiness of being under the spiritual direction of S. Philip Neri.[3] When Palestrina undertook the office of choir-master of the Oratory he wrote at S. Philip's request a great number of motets and psalms, many of which are still preserved in manuscript, in the archives of the Vallicella.[4] It was Philip's aim to make sacred music popular, and no one could do this better than Palestrina, whose music brings out the full force and meaning of the words to which it is adapted. We are told that he set to music, for three and four voices, under Philip's direction, a great many popular *canzoni* and hymns, and that these were singu-

[1] *La Gerarchia Cardinalizia* di Carlo Bartolomeo Piazza; *della chiesa di Palestrina*, p. 226.

[2] Leonardo Cecconi, *Storia di Palestrina*, lib. iv. cap. vii. p. 344.

[3] Petrini, *Memorie Prenestine*, all' anno 1540, p. 208.

[4] Baini, tom. ii. p. 326. F. Soto collected with care not only the music composed by Palestrina for the Oratory, but many other pieces which had never been published. There is in this collection the motet, *Disciplinam et Sapientiam*, a *Nunc dimittis* for eight voices, the second part of the motet, *Surge, illuminare, Jerusalem*, and many others. Baini mentions also, as existing at the Vallicella, a *Salve Regina*, and four motets for eight voices, all of exceeding beauty.

larly beautiful and effective. Many of them have disappeared, and but few have found their way into print. We find several of them in a collection made by Verovio of the *Laudi* of the Oratory, and among them two exquisite Latin motets for three voices, together with a graceful setting of the words:

Gesù sommo conforto
Tu sei tutt' il mio amore
Tu' l mio beato porto
E santo Redentore
O gran bontà! Dolce pietà!
Felice quel che teco unito sta![1]

A far more ample collection, consisting exclusively of pieces sung at the Oratory, was made two years later by F. Soto di Langa, who entered the Congregation in 1575, without relinquishing his office of singer in the Papal chapel, and aided greatly in bringing the musical exercises of the Oratory to perfection. He continued the work begun by Animuccia, by bringing out in 1575 a third book of *Laudi spirituali* for three and four voices;[2] and this volume he dedicated to Cardinal Frederic Borromeo, the cousin of S. Charles, who was a very frequent attendant at the Oratory, and greatly loved S. Philip. In 1589 he republished the three volumes, omitting some of the compositions of Animuccia, and inserting others in their stead, especially those of Palestrina.[3] And lastly, in 1591 he printed a fourth book of *Laudi spirituali* for three and four voices, dedicated to Olimpia Orsini Cesa, Duchess of

[1] *Diletto Spirituale. Canzonette Raccolte* da Simone Verovio (Rome, 1586).

[2] F. Soto had a tenor voice of such force and purity that it was the admiration of all Rome. He was a man of great piety and charity, and built and endowed in Rome the Church of S. Joseph and the first convent of Teresian nuns.

[3] *Roma, per Alessandro Gardano,* 1588.

Acquasparta, a penitent of S. Philip's, and a constant frequenter of the Oratory. It is remarkable that in none of these editions are the names of the writers of the several pieces of music given, and we may perhaps trace in this circumstance the influence of our saint's example; he kept himself always hidden from view, and he wished his spiritual children to do the same. "Still," as Baini observes, "the *Laudi* of Palestrina may be recognised at once by their simplicity, their grandeur, and their clearness of expression. None but his master-hand could have clothed with such marvellous and inimitable fitness the words which, for the most part, gushed forth from the heart of S. Philip Neri." And F. Soto says in his preface: "In this collection I have taken care to insert, not only those *Laudi* which are composed with such consummate musical art that they give delight to men of skill and taste, such as are those of Palestrina, but also, for the content of the multitude, many of simpler style and feebler vein."

The fame of Palestrina grew and spread rapidly, so that his name was in renown all over Europe, and Philip II. of Spain deemed it an honour that some of his masses were dedicated to him. But in 1594, a year before S. Philip's death, he died in the arms of our dear saint, and the circumstances of his death are related in a manuscript quoted by Baini. On the 26th January 1594, Pier Luigi had an attack of pleurisy which confined him to his bed. Finding his strength diminish, he sent for S. Philip, who ran eagerly to cheer him with his presence, and soothe him with his ineffable charity. The next day Philip heard his general confession; on the 28th he received Holy Viaticum, and on the 31st the sacrament of Extreme Unction. Philip

scarcely quitted the Vatican, in which Palestrina was lodged, and was always at the side of his tenderly loved disciple, with words of consolation and of hope. Finding himself worse on the 31st, Pier Luigi sent for his son Igino, embraced him and blessed him, and gave him counsel beseeming a christian father on the threshold of eternity. He then added: "I charge you that all my unpublished works be printed, as soon as may be, for the glory of God most high, and for His worship in His holy temples." Then he blessed him once more, and bade him farewell. On the 1st February the inflammation and fever had greatly increased, but he was still able to pass the whole day in prayer and converse with his dear father Philip. At dawn of day on the Feast of the Purification, Palestrina remembered with gratitude and joy that, but a few days before, he had composed and printed the *Laudi* of Mary, and this remembrance gave him renewed fervour and hope. And then Philip said to him, with a countenance lighted up with the love of God: "Oh my son, would it gladden you to go to enjoy the feast which to-day is held in heaven, in honour of the Queen of angels and of saints?" A thrill of tender emotion passed through the heart of the dying man, he paused awhile and then answered: "Yes, surely, I do most eagerly desire it; may Mary my advocate obtain for me this grace from her divine Son!" Scarcely had he uttered these words, says Baini, when, in fullest possession of all his powers, full of peace and trust in the mercy of the Lord, he gently breathed out his soul to God, and went, as I trust, through the intercession of the blessed Virgin Mary, and the prayers of his holy confessor Philip, where the song of divine praise flows on unceasingly.

This death was a great sorrow to our saint, and it took from him the great support of the musical exercises of his Oratory. But the providence of God had prepared for him in F. Soto one who cultivated music with diligence and taste, and was thus capable of maintaining the music of the Vallicella in the high perfection to which Palestrina had raised it. F. Soto still kept his post in the Papal Chapel, although he had become a father of the Oratory; and we find that he was very greatly esteemed by Sixtus V., who consulted him on the reforms he projected in the papal choir. He died in 1619 at the age of eighty-five, and was thus enabled to watch over the music of the Oratory for many years after S. Philip's death. In 1587 F. Gigli wrote a letter to F. Tarugi, who was then in Naples, giving him a description of the way in which the feast of the Nativity of our Lady had been kept at the Vallicella; and amongst other things he says: "our feast passed off most joyously and with admirable music. . . . Our F. Soto gathered for us such provision of singers that we had three choirs—two in the galleries, besides one in its accustomed place." We shall see in the sequel how, by means of S. Philip and F. Soto, this devotion to sacred music passed into the hearts of the fathers of the Naples Oratory. It is enough to mention here that the fathers of Naples made constant and vigorous attempts to get F. Soto amongst them, because they wished that their music should be in all respects such as their holy founder loved and used. But S. Philip had already, in his love of the newly-founded house of Naples, deprived himself of too many of his beloved companions, and he therefore refused to part with F. Soto, who was moreover bound to Rome by the high office he held in the Papal Chapel; still he sent him to

Naples for a few days to start the music of the infant congregation in the true Oratorian direction. In a manuscript of great antiquity, preserved in the archives of the Naples Oratory, we read as follows: "In 1586, F. Cesare Baronio, Cardinal Frederic Borromeo, and F. Soto, having made a journey of devotion to Monte Cassino, this last-mentioned father came on to Naples at the urgent request of F. Tarugi, and after some days returned with full content to Rome."[1]

It now remains only to speak of the sacred musical dramas which have been since called Oratorios, and which we cannot disconnect from the memory of S. Philip. These dramas arose by a natural development out of the spiritual *Laudi*, composed by the most distinguished masters of the day, and sung daily at the Oratory for the edification of the faithful. Quadrio in his History of Poetry, and Crescimbeni, concur in tracing them up to the *Laudi* of the Vallicella; although Signorelli thinks that he has found indications of them in the palace of the Vatican before the *Laudi* were sung. It is, however, certain that, in 1600, five years after S. Philip's death, a sacred drama was sung at the Vallicella, and printed that same year; and Crescimbeni states that this is the first which was written and set to music. Its title is, *Anima e Corpo* —soul and body. The words were written by a Donna Laura Guidiccione, and the music was composed by a Roman, whose name was Emiglio del Cavagliere. The great success of this first attempt led to the production of a great many sacred musical dramas, both in Rome

[1] *Vita S. Philippi Nerii secundum tempora descripta.* Its more accurate title would be, Annals of the Congregation to the year 1602. The manuscript is still in the archives of the Oratory of Naples.

and elsewhere. It was judged that, while they gave pleasure to the hearer, they tended to raise his heart to God, and were thus in keeping with the universal tendency towards the reform of discipline and the revival of religious fervour amongst Catholics. Thus we find in 1603 an Oratorio of Francesco Gadalupi Borsano of Reggio, for a new statue of the Madonna; in 1625 another by Giacomo Cicognini, entitled *il Natale di Cristo*—Christmas-day; and in 1678 Sebastian Lazzarini of Orvieto published his *Sacra Melodia di Oratorj musicali*, containing ten dramas or Oratorios, composed by masters of the greatest name.

To the sons of S. Philip sacred Oratorios have thus been always dear as a legacy of their beloved father. For some generations they strove to hold the first rank in this class of sacred music; and even in these our days they will do well to keep it, or regain it. The sweet enticement of music is quite in harmony with the spirit of S. Philip, and imparts to piety an ineffable gladness and gentleness and grace. Take away from our saint his delight in music, and you leave his image in our hearts mutilated, despoiled of much of its winning beauty. Would we understand him aright, we must combine and blend together into one the many graces and gifts which must be, of necessity, separately spoken of by him who attempts to write his life.[1]

[1] [The following extract from the diary of the celebrated John Evelyn will not be without interest to the reader. "Nov. 8, 1644.—This evening I was invited to hear rare musiq at the Chiesa Nova; the black marble pillars within led us to that most precious Oratory of Philippus Nerius their founder, they being of the Oratory of secular priests under no vow." After some remarks on "this faire Church" and its paintings, he continues: "Through this we went into the Sacristia, where, the tapers being lighted, one of the order preach'd;

after him stepp'd up a child of eight or nine years old, who pronounced an oration with so much grace, that I never was better pleased than to heare Italian so well and so intelligently spoken. . . . This being finish'd, began their Motettos, which in a lofty cupola richly painted, were sung by such rare voices, accompanied with theorbos, harpsichords, and viols, that we were even ravished with the entertainment of the evening." He returned again and again to hear the "rare musiq," and on the 24th November relates that "before that began, the courteous fathers led me into a nobly-furnish'd library contiguous to their most beautiful convent."]

CHAPTER IX.

THE ORATORY IN REQUEST IN ITALY—BEGINNINGS OF THE CONGREGATION OF NAPLES—MIRACLES OF S. PHILIP.

At the beginning of the pontificate of Sixtus V. the Oratory was firmly established, and the number of its fathers very great; its fame was spread throughout Italy, and in many cities there was an eager desire that houses of a congregation so suited to the wants of the time should be set up amongst them. Still Philip hesitated, and dealt with their urgent requests as he had, some years before, dealt with the overtures made to him by S. Charles. On the one hand, he felt a great desire to do good not to Rome only, but to the Church at large; and, on the other hand, many motives combined to make him move slowly and warily, and to resist not only the importunities of those without, but the inconsiderate ardour of those immediately around him. The same humility and unobtrusiveness which had so long restrained him from giving a definite form and a place in the Church to his congregation, led him to look on it, rather as a lowly plant destined to give out its fragrance in Rome, than as one of those vast trees whose branches are spread all over Christendom. His prudence too dissuaded him from depriving the congregation of any of the sons who were doing so much good where they

were, and who were all wanted if he would attain his great end, the reformation of the lives of the secular clergy in Rome. And thus while Philip in his inmost heart longed to see the expansion of his work throughout the Church, he waited the clear guidance of the hand of the Lord, and almost dreaded lest he should mar the work of God from a too great love of his own Institute. And hence it was that, while several Congregations were founded in other cities during the saint's lifetime, we find him always slow and reluctant, and almost hostile. He invariably set his face against all projects for the extension of the Oratory until he knew the will of God, either by means of prayer, or by the force of those events so mysteriously ordered by Providence that they make the way plain before us. His was not the bold aggressive action of many of the Church's great saints; his efforts, like his character and life, were humble, unpretending, and prudent.

The bishop of Fermo was one of the first who, in concert with the magistrates and other inhabitants of the city, requested Philip to found in it a house of the Oratory. But Philip, in a letter which is still preserved, answered as follows: "13*th June* 1580.—The Lord God knows that it is not only my own desire, but that of all the Congregation, that this our Institute should spread far and wide, by reason of the abundant fruit we see of it; and we would gladly devote ourselves to this work were it clear to us that this was our proper vocation. But hitherto, taking prudent measure of our strength, it has seemed to me well to hesitate in undertaking new Oratories outside of Rome, although I have been urged to do so by many, in particular by the most illustrious and most reverend Cardinals of S. Prassede (S. Charles) and Paleotto, in regard of their

cities of Milan and Bologna. We have always humbly declined to accede to their requests, even as now we are compelled for the same reasons to decline that which your most reverend lordship and the city of Fermo so cordially made to us. I grieve much that we cannot make a better return for the confidence and devotion which both you and they express towards this congregation. But as we greatly long to satisfy somewhat your eager desire, we have thought that your most reverend lordship might send to Rome two of the priests who wish to join the Oratory, and whom you judge to be best fitted for its exercises; and thus, by living with us, and having experience of our mode of life, they may, with the blessing of God, learn how they may best devote themselves to this great work. We will give them all possible insight and instruction as to our rules, and I promise to take as much care of them as of these my other children. And if it were a consolation to your most reverend lordship and to your city that one of our fathers should come to you to begin the new Congregation, I will do my utmost to gratify you, and will watch over its progress and growth with the greatest care I can. Deign to look on us as your devoted servants in all things; and may the Lord God have you in His holy keeping!

Servitore, FILIPPO NERI."

The desire of the bishop and city of Fermo was thus not granted at that time; but some years later, and in the lifetime of S. Philip, the congregation was founded in that city by some holy and zealous priests. Nor were the attempts of the Genoese and Bolognese more successful. The former applied to the saint through Raffaele Fieschi Ruggi, a nobleman of their city; he

received their application with much gratitude, but expressed his regret that he could not as yet spare any of his fathers from Rome, and advised them to bestow on the Theatines the house and church of S. Siro which they had offered to the congregation. It was not so easy to refuse the Bolognese, whose request was urged by Cardinal Paleotto, a disciple and a penitent of S. Philip. The Cardinal exerted himself to the utmost to obtain the desire of his heart; when he found that neither prayers nor entreaties were of avail, he offered to the fathers of the Oratory the parish of S. Andrea in Bologna, which fell vacant in 1586, and placed all its revenues at their disposal for the establishment of the congregation. But Philip had the firmness to resist the urgent prayer of the Cardinal, whom he valued and loved so greatly, and the congregation was not erected in Bologna until after the saint's death, in the pontificate of Gregory XV. Florence, too, as we learn from F. Germanico Fedeli, besought Philip to plant his congregation in the home of his early years; and Mario Carafa, Archbishop of Naples, who met Philip in Rome during the Jubilee of 1575, entreated him to let him have the priests of the Oratory in Naples. But Philip persisted in his refusal, pleading always the same reasons which he had set forth in his letter to the Bishop of Fermo. It was to him a consolation and a joy that his lowly congregation should be in such request, and a sorrow that he could not as yet venture to extend it without impairing the vigour of the Oratory of Rome.[1]

Notwithstanding this refusal, Naples was the first city of Italy which, to its great joy, obtained a Congregation of the Oratory, and the history of the origin

[1] Marciano, *Memorie Historiche della Congregazione dell' Oratorio*, om. ii. lib. i.

and development of this first-born daughter of the Roman Congregation has for me a personal charm too great, and is too intimately connected with the life of S. Philip, to be passed over in silence. For Philip loved this Congregation with an especial love; he governed it as its Superior all the time that he continued to be *Preposito* of the Vallicella; to it he sent his most valued and beloved sons; Philip's eldest born, Tarugi, founded it, and breathed into it the spirit of his holy father; and it was from its birth so dear to the Neapolitans that it was enabled to undertake not only all that was done by the Congregation in Rome, but other works of great importance and value. The rise of this Congregation shows us how broad and liberal and comprehensive was the priestly work confided by S. Philip to his sons. We cannot separate it from the Roman Congregation; if we would fully feel the significance of S. Philip's institute, we must study it in the history of these two great Congregations, which, taken together, complete his idea.

The Oratory of Naples owes its establishment, under God, mainly to three persons: F. del Tufo, a Theatine, afterwards the deservedly esteemed Bishop of Acerra; Annibale di Capua, archbishop of Naples; and the noble Lady Costanza del Carretto; and of these three the efforts of the illustrious Theatine were the most persevering and availing. All orders of Neapolitan society, and most especially the nobles, concurred in it with great devotion and zeal. The time, too, was well chosen, for the minds of all good christians in the city were disposed towards a wise and prudent reform, not only in the lives of the clergy, but in those of all ranks of society. And yet, if we reflect on the difficulties

which naturally beset an undertaking so vast, and on S. Philip's almost invincible reluctance to set about it, we feel that only a very special grace of God could have crowned it with success.

In 1583, F. Baronio was sent to Naples by Pope Gregory XIII. on an affair which was, as contemporary memoirs tell us, of great importance and secrecy. The important and secret affair was, that information had reached Rome, through the Theatine fathers, of the appearance of a heretic who impugned the teaching of the Church on the Holy Eucharist, and that it was deemed necessary to stay this evil. Baronio, who was deservedly esteemed for his learning as well as his piety, came to remove from Naples the peril of this heresy, and he succeeded in doing so without attracting much observation. While in Naples, from the beginning of January to the end of Lent, he was lodged in the house of the Theatines; and although by Philip's command he did not preach, and lived in great retirement and reserve, the Theatines, and especially F. del Tufo, were charmed with his rare merit and virtue. They at length spoke to him of the very great desire they felt to see the Oratory set up in Naples; but Baronio knew the thoughts and feelings of his father Philip, and told them that it was a thing not to be thought of. On his return to Rome he tried to feel his way on the matter with S. Philip, but without success. It happened that very shortly after this F. del Tufo was summoned to a Chapter General of his order held in Genoa, and as he passed through Rome he went eagerly to see Baronio, got himself presented to S. Philip, and at once entreated him most earnestly to send some of his fathers to found a new congregation in Naples. The saint

replied according to his wont, and explained that it was as yet out of the question that he should think of founding new congregations. To send the fathers about in different directions would be to ruin the still youthful congregation of Rome, where they were doing great good, and that, without any certainty of compensating advantage to others. Meanwhile F. del Tufo had observed that F. Tarugi was suffering much from sciatica, and therefore proposed that S. Philip should send him for a few months to Naples; the pure sea air would refresh him, and the baths of the neighbouring island of Ischia and the sulphur springs of Pozzuoli were very useful in cases of sciatica. Philip gave his consent, and on his return from Genoa, F. del Tufo had the satisfaction of taking Tarugi with him to Naples, and of installing him for a time in the House of S. Paul, almost adjoining that of the Theatines. Thence Tarugi removed into an apartment of the Hospital of S. Maria del Popolo, occupied by F. Borla of the Oratory, to whom Philip had given permission to live with the holy Cardinal d'Arezzo, Archbishop of Naples, and to prolong his stay in that city for some time after the Cardinal's death. While Tarugi's main object in Naples was the restoration of his health, he could not refrain from doing something for the souls of others; and at the request of many gentlemen of the city he preached several sermons in the Church of S. Maria del Popolo. He preached, according to the use of the Oratory, with great simplicity and an absence of all attempt at what is called eloquence; and such was the force and the unction of his sermons that they sank down into the hearts of the people, and inflamed their hearts with the love of God and of virtue. This effect was the more surprising, that the

Neapolitans had acquired under the Spanish domination a taste for high-sounding words and far-fetched metaphors; and now the simple unadorned beauty of Tarugi's sermons cast a spell over their minds and hearts. But ere long Tarugi, who had come to Naples only to take the baths, was well enough to return to Rome, leaving behind him, however, a deep and indelible impression.

F. del Tufo still clung to his resolve that the Oratory should have a house in Naples; and on his next visit to Rome he again saw S. Philip, and renewed his entreaties in the name of a great many of the inhabitants of Naples, as well as his own. But S. Philip could not be induced to give any definite promise; he would only allow Tarugi to go for another season to take the baths which had already done him so much good, and to take with him two younger members of the Congregation, Antonio Carli of Aquila, and Tommaso Galletti of Nice, together with two lay brothers to wait on them. It would seem from this that S. Philip wanted to feel his way in Naples; it was a kind of unavowed experiment. And this conjecture is confirmed, both by Tarugi's conduct when he reached Naples, and by a decree of the congregation made at this time and quoted by F. Marciano, in which are these words: "If it should ever be the will of the Lord that a congregation of the Oratory be founded in Naples, the Superior of it shall be F. Francesco Tarugi." Moreover, while S. Philip's humility and prudence made him feel uncertain about the will of God in regard of the congregation of Naples, S. Charles Borromeo had already almost decreed its foundation. At the time when he was about to rest from his labours in the joy of his Lord, he prayed fervently with this intention, and wrote to his beloved

friend, F. Giovenale Ancina, a letter, still preserved as a relic in the Naples Oratory, in which he says: "I will not fail to remember in my prayers, such as they are, the new Oratory of your Congregation in Naples, that the Lord may grant you such success as befits the great harvest before you there. And I trust in Him that He will also send you abundance of labourers."

Tarugi and his companions left Rome, however, without any clear indication of the wishes and feelings of their beloved father. Their journey was accomplished, not without some perils by the way, and they were for a few days received into the house of the hospitable and kindly Theatine fathers. Thence they removed, first to S. Maria del Popolo, and then to a small house on the beautiful height of S. Martino, which was given them by the abbate Navarro. This house, at present occupied by the religious of Suor Orsola, had a little church attached to it, and the situation was enchanting. The air was pure and fresh; at their feet lay the city of Naples, and beyond it the sea, gemmed with islands; everything tended to excite glad and holy thoughts. Still, it was too far from the centre of the city, and therefore ill adapted to the exercises of the Oratory; and none of the fathers who went thither were satisfied with it.[1] Meanwhile, nothing could exceed the affectionate cordiality with which the fathers were everywhere received. F. del Tufo was naturally foremost in his demonstrations of joy; Mgr. Annibale di Capua,

[1] In an unpublished letter to S. Philip, bearing date 10th May 1584, Tarugi writes: "The house of Monte S. Martino would delight your Reverence, but the access to it is difficult." He speaks of many kindnesses received from the archbishop, and adds: "The archbishop kisses your Reverence's hands." This letter is in the archives of the Naples Oratory.

archbishop of Naples, welcomed them gladly, and continued to be the protector and benefactor of the infant Oratory; and the Lady Costanza d'Oria del Carretto not only favoured the work, but contributed to it large sums of money. And as the archbishop was very anxious that the exercises of the Oratory should begin without any delay, he ordered that they should be carried on in the Cathedral, until he could find a church to place at the disposal of the fathers. And this was accordingly done.

The sermons were preached mostly by Tarugi, and sometimes by Antonio Carli, whom Tarugi speaks of as a man of rare gifts and an admirable preacher; and they were listened to with great delight and edification by large congregations of all classes, especially of the nobles. Tarugi writes to S. Philip on the 25th May 1584: "We are going to begin the Oratory in the cathedral with the help of your prayers, and I have from modesty withdrawn it into one of the transepts." The musical part of the exercises appeared to him of such importance that in this, his first letter, he writes: "We have made arrangements for the music, and are anxiously looking out for F. Soto. Your Reverence, *Padre mio*, will not, I hope, fail to send him, for I have spoken of his coming as a settled thing." In another letter, written on 2d January 1585, we read: "The congregation in the Cathedral has been so great that many gentlemen have been obliged to go away, because there was no room for them. The whole choir, which is very large, was quite filled; and so was all the space between the two choirs, and away towards the sacristy, and the steps of the chapel of S. Januarius, and behind the stalls on the other side of the church, so that one could not desire a nobler congregation or greater atten-

tion. This great popularity, and a beginning so grand, make me feel a little uneasy, but I ascribe it all to your prayers." Later on the same day he adds: "On Sunday we preached to our ordinary congregation, and yesterday being New-Year's-day, we had a crowd so great that it filled us with amazement. Pray for us, and redouble your prayers on Sundays and feasts of obligation." A few days later he writes again: "Things continue to go on very prosperously with us, and the fruit of our labours is so great and so manifest that it does not seem to me possible that we can ever leave Naples; for I am sure we could not do so without wounding and almost wronging the whole city, and the nobility in particular. Notwithstanding this, I pray without ceasing to God that He would *open and shut* as may be most for His honour and glory, and always according to His good pleasure." But Tarugi's mind was not altogether at ease, for Philip had not as yet given his explicit consent to the foundation of an Oratory in Naples; and he resolved to open his whole heart to the saint with loving confidence, and tell him all his perplexities. Thus he writes in February 1585: "We are all well, and I should be a great deal more cheerful if I could send you my heart wrapped up in this letter, naked and open as it is to the Majesty of God, who will, I hope, vouchsafe to show you all that is in it, to my great relief and for the consolation of your Reverence, whose hands hold the reins of my will, bound thereunto moreover by vow, so that you can turn and draw me whithersoever you will." And a few days later he says: "In a word, I am most desirous to see you soon, for I cannot be as happy here as I should be if you kept me here not merely by permission, *permissivè*, but *præceptivè*, by an express

command. May God show you my heart clearly and fully."

Meanwhile the activity of Tarugi and his labours went on increasing. Besides the regular sermons in the cathedral he preached once a week in the house of the Signora del Carretto, and was very busy in the confessional. And so eager was the desire on all sides to see the fathers of the Oratory permanently established in Naples, that several churches, among them some of the most noteworthy, were offered to F. Tarugi. Some wished him to take Sant' Arcangelo a Bajano, others offered him S. Andrea, and others again talked of the vast church of the Spirito Santo. The *abbate* and priests of S. Giorgio urged on him the church now occupied by the Pii Operaj. The archbishop hesitated for some time in his choice of a befitting church, and at length fixed upon that of S. Stefano; and the terms of agreement had just been settled with the archbishop by Tarugi, when S. Philip sent him an order to return at once with the other fathers to Rome. This blow was so unexpected that it deeply grieved and wounded the hearts of all who had taken an interest in the work. No one could even guess the motive of this very precise command, and all were perplexed to reconcile it with S. Philip's well-known charity and courtesy. Many thought that Tarugi should set it aside, and write to the saint to explain to him what serious injury would be done by this sudden departure of the fathers, and to implore him to revoke the order. But Tarugi was the true disciple of the great master of humility and obedience, and set out from Naples, with great sorrow indeed, but without any needless delay. This was towards the end of May 1585, at the beginning of the pontificate of Sixtus V. It seemed that the Con-

gregation of the Oratory in Naples had died at the moment of its birth; but the ways of Providence are not as our ways.

We know nothing of the reasons which led the saint to this sudden resolution. It was perhaps one of the essays he was wont to make, that he might know the will of God more clearly. It may be too, that before intrusting to Tarugi a work so great he wished to put to a final test the virtue of his great disciple, and assure himself that he was so firmly grounded in humility and obedience as to be the fitting instrument of Providence in an undertaking so important. The political state of Naples at that time may also have contributed in some degree to determine the resolve of our saint, just as the foreseen outbreak of plague in Milan led him to withdraw his sons from that city.

Shortly before the recall of the fathers, Naples, which was at that time under the domination of Spain, had been convulsed by a popular outbreak, accompanied with bloodshed and with crimes of exceptional atrocity. A scarcity of corn in Spain had led Philip II. to import a large supply from Naples; and the corn merchants had taken advantage of this unwonted demand to buy up all the corn in the south of Italy, so that as early as the month of May Naples began to suffer from the high price of bread, and the populace broke out into rebellion. They seized Gian-Vincenzo Starace, one of the magistrates elected by the city, who had sought shelter in vain within the monastery of Sant' Agostino; and there, within the sacred precincts, they barbarously murdered and mutilated him. After this appalling excess the city was in a state of terror and anxiety; all work was stopped; everything precious was hidden away; the clergy ordered processions to

appease the anger of God. The Duke of Ossuna, who was then viceroy, condemned to death thirty persons implicated in this foul murder, and the sentence was executed with every circumstance of cruelty. Besides these, a far greater number were arrested, and either condemned to the gallows or kept in prison. This scene of terror lasted for two months, until, on the 4th December, Philip II. granted an amnesty, and set most of the prisoners at liberty. It is, then, quite possible that this terrible revolt, and its still more terrible repression, may have led Philip to conclude that the time had not yet come for founding the Congregation in Naples.

Still, although the fathers were gone, the people of Naples did not lose heart; their eagerness to have the Oratory in their midst was rather increased than abated by the hesitation and reluctance of the saint. They resolved to have their way, and in the end they had it. In order to prepare the way, many of the principal inhabitants, with the archbishop at their head, decided on buying a house for the Congregation at their own expense; and they trusted that this proof of their affection and their desire would touch S. Philip's heart. They then determined to plead their cause with the saint, not only through the Theatines, but through the archbishop himself. The archbishop thereupon went to Rome and laid the matter before Philip with great warmth of entreaty; and although he did not succeed in wringing from the saint any very definite promise, he collected on his return to Naples a large sum of money and bought a palace of the noble family of the Seripandi. This palace stood facing the cathedral, and was therefore admirably situated for the purposes of the Oratory; and in October 1585 it was made over by

formal deed to the Fathers of the Oratory of S. Maria in Vallicella.[1] By advice of the Archbishop, there was attached to this donation one condition only—that by August of the following year, at latest, some of the fathers should take up their abode in the house, and set up in it the Congregation of the Oratory.

All this was done without one word of promise or assent from Philip; but a desire so eager and so persistent, and a generosity so trustful, could scarcely fail to do violence to his heart, and constrain him to yield. F. del Tufo was the soul of all this insistence, and he lost no time in giving the saint notice of this donation, and of the condition appended to it. In one of his letters he says: "As soon as the purchase of the house was completed I gave notice thereof to F. Philip, and to the others of the said fathers; and although the matter had reached this point, they still required a little time to consider it maturely, and to commend it to God by means of prayer, for that they could not so suddenly accept our invitation." Thus we see that Philip's hesitation and diffidence were not as yet lulled to rest.

A few days later the saint, who had not ceased to pray to God for His guidance in a matter of such importance, declared that the will of God was at length plainly manifested to him. He decided that the Congregation of Naples should be founded, and from that moment he devoted himself to ensure its prosperity and success. F. Bordini, who was at that time secretary of the Congregation in Rome, at once communicated this decision to F. del Tufo in the following letter, which

[1] This deed shows that the ordinary name of the Congregation at that time was still *the Oratory of S. Girolamo*, from the church in which it had begun its exercises. And hence it is that the Fathers of the Naples Oratory are still called the *Girolamini*.

so beautifully reflects the humility of S. Philip: "We well know the exceeding charity of your Reverence, moved by which you have taken such pains in this undertaking that it has been brought at length, and mainly by your diligence, your wish, and your influence, to a happy issue. We are not, nevertheless, without much fear, a fear which is great in proportion to the greatness of the work. It binds us to things which are so far beyond our little strength, by reason of the fewness and the incapacity of our subjects, who, in comparison with so flourishing, so holy, and so learned religious orders, are but as dwarfs in comparison with giants. Nevertheless, we comfort ourselves with the hope that God, who has brought the work to the point at which it now is, will not fail even *of these stones to raise up children to Abraham*, and enable them to content the desire and expectation of your city of benediction. For your sake we submit to deprive ourselves for a time of F. Francesco Maria Tarugi, although every one must see what a wrong is done by his absence to the work we have in hand in Rome. . . . *Padre mio*, since it is you who have been up to this time the cause of our beginning a work so far above our strength, I beg you be now our intercessor with God our Lord that He would give to all those who shall be sent to you such a spirit that they may, if not altogether, at least in part, content and fulfil your hopes.—Your servant and son in the Lord, Francesco Bordini, in the name of *Padre Messer Filippo* and of all the Congregation."

The Neapolitans hailed with joy the close of all these negotiations, and the letter from Rome which confirmed it; but still they could not divest themselves of all uneasiness. They wrote again to Rome, urgently

pressing F. Tarugi and his companions to come at once; and the Signora del Carretto especially, a lady of restless and impulsive disposition, who could not brook delay, wrote very warmly and impatiently to Tarugi himself. But precisely at this juncture came a fresh hindrance, of which Philip was again the occasion, though not the cause. On the 16th January, our dear saint, who was then in his seventy-first year, was suddenly seized one morning with a very serious illness, and in a few hours seemed to be at the point of death. The physicians and all those around him gave up hope of his recovery, and hastened to give him Extreme Unction. But, through the mercy of God, on that same morning, when all hope seemed gone, he was restored suddenly to his wonted health. Still this unexpected and violent attack filled the hearts of the community with such grief and terror that Tarugi could not bring himself to leave his beloved father. On the 31st January he wrote to the Signora del Carretto as follows: "I suppose you have heard before this of the illness of our reverend Father Philip, which was indeed so grave as to wring our hearts with grief and compassion. He is well to-day, but the physicians keep him in bed, fearing a return of the disease. And for this cause we keep guard in his room all night, and are filled with apprehension that he may be suddenly taken from amongst us. Our reverend fathers and brothers are of opinion that it would not be well for me to leave Rome till we see in what condition of health and of vigour this illness leaves our blessed father, to attend to the government of the Congregation. Wherefore I entreat your most gracious ladyship to deign to lend me to him until Easter. I should be sorely reluctant to fail in my duty of succouring and consoling the

father of my soul, and of serving the Congregation in this its hour of extreme need; and, on the other hand I am pledged to come to Naples for the service of the souls of that noble and christian city, to which I feel myself so closely united in the bond of Christian charity, as well as by the natural tie of cordial affection. I suffer exceeding anguish that I cannot divide myself into two parts; so that with one of them I might serve Christ in the person of my good priest and father, who has begotten me in the Lord, my guide who has drawn me out of the pit and mire and misery of many sins, and with the other, content the desire of so many good people." And he concludes by saying that, as an earnest of his good-will towards the Signora herself and all the people of Naples, F. Philip would send them almost immediately F. Antonio Talpa, one of the deputies who aided the saint in the government of the congregation, the young Antonio Carli, whom they already knew, and F. Giovenale Ancina, "a philosopher and theologian, a most graceful speaker, and a man of great purity and goodness of life." He wrote also to the archbishop of Naples and to F. del Tufo, and commended to them the three fathers whom Philip had fixed on instead of himself, greatly extolling their singular virtue and learning. But towards the middle of February, just as the three fathers were on the point of leaving Rome for Naples, together with three other younger members of the congregation, this arrangement was suddenly set aside. The saint was restored to perfect health, and the Neapolitans, on learning this, renewed their entreaties that he would now send them Tarugi, whom they so greatly loved. In their great eagerness, and with a view to cut off every occasion of delay, they sent to S. Philip two representatives, one,

a priest, named de Bellis, appointed by the Archbishop, and the other, Signor Giulio Ram, by the citizens themselves. When these ambassadors reached Rome they were received by the saint with the most genial welcome; he gave them rooms in the house and treated them with his wonted gentleness and courtesy. They lost no time in setting forth the cordial good will of the Neapolitans; they dwelt on the size and beauty of the Palazzo Seripando, and its fitness for the exercises of the Oratory; and then they implored Philip to grant them F. Tarugi, for whom they said all Naples felt an esteem and affection almost beyond belief. The saint felt such reluctance to part with one whom he loved so tenderly, and whom he knew to be of such use to the Congregation in Rome, that he hesitated a great deal, and asked for a few days to consider the demand maturely. After much and fervent prayer he submitted the request of the two ambassadors to the Congregation, and it was by them unanimously decreed that Tarugi should go to Naples, and found the Oratory in that city. At whatever cost of pain and sorrow to his own heart Philip assented to this decree, and bade Tarugi prepare to go to Naples, taking with him F. Talpa, four young clerics of great promise, whose names were Antonio Carli, Francesco Bozio, Tommaso Galletti, and Giuseppe Prati, together with the two lay-brothers, Michael Angelo and Lorenzo. On the 8th March 1586, they took their departure from Rome, and it was a touching and memorable sight when they prostrated themselves with many tears at Philip's feet to receive his farewell blessing. It so affected the two ambassadors that they also cast themselves at Philip's feet in like manner, and, indeed, Signor Ram had in the

morning besought the saint to hear his confession. Philip raised his eyes to heaven and with a full heart blessed them all; nor was that blessing void—three hundred years have passed away, and its effect abides still with us.

Such were the beginnings of the Oratory of Naples; of its early history, so far as it is bound up with the life of S. Philip, and casts light on his character, we shall have occasion to speak in due place. We shall see how the labours of Tarugi were soon shared by others, and especially by Giovenale Ancina, that chosen soul who lived and died in repute of sanctity, and who is one of the fairest jewels in the crown of the Oratory.

And now it is time for us to go back to Rome, and look at S. Philip as he appeared in the first year of the pontificate of Sixtus V. Those who saw him for the first time as an old man, going about in the Vallicella, or through the streets of Rome, might have taken him for the lowest and least considerable person in the house, all about him breathed such an air of modesty and humility. Yet, at all times and wherever he went, the gift of miracles accompanied him; and he wrought them with such simplicity that they seemed the most natural things in the world. Thus, two eye-witnesses attested on oath, during the process of canonization, that in 1585 Giovanni Lucci of Fossombrone was thrown from his horse, with such violence that he fractured his skull and the bone of his shoulder, and this accident was followed by a fever which placed his life in great danger, as he was already more than sixty years old. Philip went to see him, embraced him tenderly, and bade him be of good courage, for that he would not die. From that moment the apparently dying man recovered. A youth, whom Philip had

healed of an inflammation of the lungs, related his cure himself during the process, and his account was confirmed by the testimony on oath of his mother. Philip, says the youth, asked me first where I felt pain, and then whether I would make my confession. I said, yes; and then he knelt down and began to pray, and laid his hand on the place where the pain was, while he was hearing all my sins. The moment he touched the place where the pain was greatest I felt instant relief, and it seemed to me as if his hand carried away the pain with it as he moved it. When I had finished my confession, that most tender and loving father, who was kneeling in prayer all the time, would say my penance for me. And then at last he said: "Cheer up, my son; you will not die this time; to-morrow morning you will be quite well." And so it came to pass; the next morning the youth rose in perfect health, as though he had not been ill at all. We find again that Eugenia Mansueti was cured of her sickness by simply commending herself to Philip; that he revealed to a personage of great influence one of his most secret thoughts, as he himself attested on oath during the process; that when Gian-Francesco Bernardini, a priest of the Congregation, was so ill that he was given up as past hope, Philip predicted to him his recovery, and obtained it by his prayers; with many other facts of the same kind.

One of these illustrates Philip's charity too beautifully to be omitted. A youth of noble family was accustomed to go often to see Philip from the great devotion he felt towards him. Now it happened that he had fallen into some sin which affected him with such shame that he could not summon up courage to mention it to the religious who was his confessor. After

this confession he went into F. Philip's room, and the saint looked intently at him without saying a word. As he looked, his face seemed to the youth as that of an angel of God; but in a short time his eyes filled with tears, and he began to weep as those weep on whom has fallen some great bereavement. The youth could not refrain himself at this sight, and he too began to weep bitterly, and knew not what to do or what to say. And then Philip said to him with a voice broken with weeping, and in a tone of tenderest affection: "Why is it that you do not make a full confession of your sins? O my son, never lie to your spiritual father by hiding your faults from him, but open to him your whole heart." These words remind us of those spoken to the woman of Samaria by Him whom she found sitting on Jacob's well, and they overwhelmed the youth with amazement and awe. All trembling, and pierced with compunction, he resolved that he would make a full and complete confession. This he did the next morning; and on entering Philip's room, the saint, who knew nothing either of his resolution or of its accomplishment, looked at him a moment and then said: "Well, my son, now you have changed your looks; you are quite another person now." From that day forward the youth lived a Christian and holy life.

CHAPTER X.

THE ORATORY OF NAPLES.

The year 1586, in which was laid the foundation of the Oratory in Naples, was one of great terror and distress. The memory of the popular outbreak of the preceding year, and of the unrelenting severity with which it had been suppressed and punished, was still fresh and bleeding; and, added to this, the whole kingdom was overrun by troops of banditti, who robbed and murdered those whom they found on the highways, and even pillaged towns and cities. The Count of Miranda, who was appointed viceroy towards the end of 1586, made great but unsuccessful attempts to put down these banditti; their power and their audacity grew like a torrent, and resistance seemed altogether hopeless. The condition of the Papal States was even more pitiable; the banditti were really absolute masters of the lives and property of all their inhabitants. Although Pope Sixtus V. extirpated this evil with fire and sword, it was sad and distressing to see the Vicar of Christ compelled by the necessity of the case to resort to measures which seemed so cruel. The States of the Church, as well as the kingdom of Naples, were drenched with blood, and it was precisely at this time of terror that Philip decided on founding the Oratory in Naples. It may be that his courage rose as difficulties grew greater, and that the misery of Naples touched his heart, and

constrained him to apply to its ills the only remedy in his power. In any case, the sore distresses of the time should help us to appreciate at their full value the affectionate eagerness of the Neapolitans, and their munificence towards the rising Congregation.

And yet, we must not imagine that the time was ill-chosen for the new foundation. In spite of many evils, both political and social, no time could be more propitious to the rise and development of whatever religious order or congregation might be raised up by God to heal the wounds inflicted, on the State as well as on the Church, by the so-called reformation. The Spanish domination was far from an unmixed blessing to Naples; it was rather injurious, because there were between the two peoples so many points of resemblance. Conquerors and usurpers of alien race do not easily blend with the conquered; whereas if there be similarity and sympathy of natural character, the vices of the one people are grafted on those of the other, and both are made worse. The Spaniards were, indeed, pious and devout; and they did no further harm to religion than the introducing and fostering that taste for display and show in ceremonial which is still so dear to the Neapolitans. In the sixteenth century, the people of Naples were noted for their piety, and the Spaniards, with all their faults, loved their religion with ardour; so that when the movement of reform begun by Popes and saints, and by the Council of Trent, reached Naples, it was welcomed with great joy and zealously promoted. Nor should we be just were we not to allow, that while this alacrity of zeal was mainly due to the nearness of Rome, the Spanish domination helped much to sustain and direct it.

Although Rome and the Papacy were the head and

soul of the great Catholic revival of the sixteenth century, the saints of God were unquestionably its main instruments. And among the saints of that time, setting aside our own S. Philip, the apostle of Rome, and therefore to a great extent of the whole Church, the Spaniards held the foremost place. We owe to Spain, that nation so stately and so chivalrous, so rich in poetry and so profoundly thoughtful, most of the saints of the great revival. S. Ignatius, S. Francis Xavier, S. John of Avila, S. Teresa, S. John of God, S. Peter of Alcantara, and others, contributed very greatly towards the restoration of the Church of God to its native purity and beauty. It was natural, then, that Naples, which was at that time under Spanish rule and Spanish influences, should sympathize warmly with a renewal in which Spain had so large a part, and concur actively in promoting it. When Tarugi and the other sons of S. Philip came to Naples, the people had not indeed unlearned all their vices, nor entirely tamed the almost savage impetuosity of their fervid nature, but they were no longer what they had been at the beginning of the century. The good seed had been largely sown amongst them, and had brought forth fruit abundantly. It was not for nothing that they had welcomed and made munificent provision in their city for the Theatines, the Jesuits, the Carmelites of S. Teresa's reform, the Fatebene-Fratelli and the Servites, while they continued to protect and uphold the older orders of religion. The fervour of all these new congregations, the diffusion of religious truths and ideas, and many other causes we cannot stop to enumerate, had begun the great work of religious revival in which Philip was, through his sons, to take so great a part.

It was to be expected then, that the fathers of the

Oratory would be well received in Naples, but the joyousness of their welcome and the rapid and wonderful success of their work surpassed all expectation and hope. Whether we ascribe it to the veneration and love with which Tarugi was regarded by all, or to the fame of Philip's sanctity, the fact is beyond question. Within a few years the lowly Congregation of the Oratory had made such progress that it equalled, if it did not surpass, the most renowned religious institutes of Naples. But the fathers never forgot that they were the disciples and sons of a father who was *clothed with humility*. They preached with fervour and great simplicity; they were modest and unobtrusive in manner; money was not wanting, yet they never asked alms, for their rule did not allow them to do so; they were few in number, and, with the exception of F. Borla, of whom we must speak particularly, almost unknown in Naples. Nevertheless their work grew with astonishing rapidity, so that within a few years the Congregation became the centre of the religious and moral life of the city. As the means at their disposal increased they threw themselves into new works of charity, and laid the foundations of a church on which they expended more than a million of *lire*, and which surpasses in size and in beauty every other church in the city. Even S. Philip, with his boundless trust in God, had not ventured to hope thus much when he blessed his disciples and sent them forth as apostles into the city of Naples.

The memoirs of the time relate that when Tarugi reached Naples with his companions on the 12th March 1586, he was received there "as an angel of God." F. del Tufo and the Signora del Carretto provided them with money for the expenses of their

journey, their food, and the little furniture they needed. From that day forward the sons of S. Philip asked for nothing, nor ever suffered lack. They took up their abode at first in the ancient house of the Hospital of S. Maria del Popolo, in which F. Borla already lived; and they then set to work to adapt the Palazzo Seripando to the wants of the religious community, taking especial care to fit up a temporary church for public worship as well as for the exercises of the Oratory. As soon as they arrived they began to preach; and although the cathedral was offered them they chose for their sermons the church of S. Maria del Popolo, as more in keeping with the lowliness of the Congregation. But ere long the archbishop expressed his wish that the sermons and other exercises of the Oratory should be transferred to the cathedral; and S. Philip, whom they consulted on the point, bade them at once comply with the archbishop's wish. In the letter written in the saint's name to F. Tarugi by F. Bordini the secretary, he says: "Here we do not fail to pray much for your work, that God may gather from it the utmost possible fruit to the honour of His divine Majesty and the salvation of souls, which is your main end and ours." Strong in the prayers of his holy master and father, Tarugi took fresh courage and increased the number of his sermons in the cathedral. Vast crowds flocked to hear him, and many Jesuits and Theatines, friars and priests, were to be seen touched and amazed at a style of preaching so new and so thoroughly effective. In about five months the fathers, and with them F. Borla, removed from the house of the Hospital into the Seripando Palace opposite the cathedral, which was now ready to receive them. Before the end of 1586 the temporary church was finished, so that Tarugi was

enabled to transfer to it the sermons and exercises. He began by preaching twice every week, then three times, then every day, and at last several times every day, and always to a numerous congregation and with abundant fruit. The Neapolitans had never been accustomed to listen to sermons on the week-days; but they soon acquired a great taste for them, and flocked to them in great numbers. Besides the frequency of sermons, all the other exercises of the Roman Congregation were carefully carried on; such as constant attendance in the confessionals, music and singing in the Oratory after the sermons, and solemn High Mass on Sundays and feasts. And as it was the custom in Rome to hold the Oratory during the summer, not in the church but in the open air, in the pleasant grounds of some villa, so in Naples it was held on the height of Capodimonte, which looks over the whole city, and gladdens the eye with a view of enchanting beauty. It was very soon resolved to try the experiment of holding these exercises of the Oratory on all feast-days, a thing which had not as yet been attempted in Rome; and the result was so encouraging that S. Philip not only approved it, but ordered that the same custom should be followed in Rome.

We can without difficulty picture to ourselves Philip's gladness of heart at the tidings which came to him from Naples. He cast about to increase the number of labourers in a field so vast and *so white already to harvest*. And first he ordered F. Borla to join Tarugi and F. Talpa in the Naples Oratory; and then, on the 29th October of that same year, 1586, he sent them one of his most dear and trusted disciples, Giovenale Ancina; and to these others were subsequently added as they were wanted. And now we have before us the

four great pillars of that stately edifice of the Congregation of Naples, of which Philip was the architect and master-builder, Tarugi, Borla, Talpa, and Ancina, men whose memory is in benediction, and their names never to be mentioned without honour. They are four comely sons of a great saint, and on each of them is stamped the living speaking likeness of their father. The three first, indeed, reflect some aspects of the image of S. Philip rather than others, the fourth gives it back to us whole and entire. We look on them and study them with care, for Philip is then only fully known when studied in these his greatest sons.

Ere long new subjects began to offer themselves to the Congregation of Naples, men remarkable for their piety and learning, who were admitted with much precaution, and above all with the approval of S. Philip. The first of these was Tiberio Vannuccio, a doctor of canon as well as civil law, at the age of twenty-four; and he was soon followed by Lepido Spadafora, a youth of great piety, and of noble and wealthy family. Towards the building of the new church the city of Naples gave two thousand ducats, and as the Palazzo Seripando was now too small for the increasing number of fathers, some adjoining houses were bought and thrown into it. Meanwhile Tarugi and the other fathers laboured without intermission. They remembered the visits to the seven churches; but as the Spaniards looked with suspicion on all large popular gatherings as being likely to lead to tumult and sedition, they substituted for these visits an exposition of the Blessed Sacrament with great solemnity during five days of the Carnival. Philip readily gave the required permission; and although the temporary church was neither beautiful nor

rich in its adornment, the sacred solemnity was carried through with great dignity and pomp, and enlivened with very good music.

We have often seen what peculiar affection S. Philip felt towards the poor and needy, and especially for those who were gathered together in the hospitals. And his sons inherited this spirit of their father. F. Borla, who had come to Naples before there was any thought of founding the Congregation in that city, took up his abode, as it were naturally, in the Hospital of the Incurables, and devoted himself with unwearying charity to their service. Before the foundation of the Oratory, Tarugi loved to live with F. Borla in the hospital, and when the first anxieties of the new Congregation were over, he made the care of the *Incurabili* one of its most important works. The hospital was at that time poor, and in every way repulsive. The fathers began their work in it by visiting it frequently themselves, and by sending their penitents to relieve the misery of these poor infirm creatures with their alms, and to soothe them with words of sympathy and consolation. The work grew so rapidly that ere long three congregations were formed, each of which built an oratory near the house of the fathers, and under their management. Of these the first was formed of the nobles, magistrates, and lawyers; the second, of merchants and those in trade; and the third, of artisans. These all devoted themselves to works of charity under the direction of the fathers; they met in their several oratories for common worship and prayer; they visited the hospital, taking with them food and all that was needed for the comfort of the sick; they set up fresh beds in it at their own expense; and as time went on donations and bequests enabled them to perfect every

arrangement in the hospital.[1] Another congregation was that of the ladies, which held its meetings in a room at the hospital, and was the wonder and admiration of Naples for its heroic charity. The ladies of Naples had never been accustomed to think of their poor infirm sisters who were lying neglected in the hospital. But the fervid exhortations of Father Giovenale Ancina awakened their dormant charity; they joined the congregation in great numbers, and were known as the *Donne Benefattrici*. Among them were seen the noblest ladies of an aristocracy hitherto regarded as haughty and supercilious, and inordinately vain of its privileges; and the Countess of Miranda, wife of the viceroy, placed herself at their head. They seemed to the poor women of the *Incurabili* as angels of consolation; they relieved all their wants, and lavished on them the most tender and persevering care; and their work is continued still.[2] All this fervour of charity delighted and consoled S. Philip. Tarugi then laid before the saint his magnificent plans for the church they proposed to build, and Philip blessed his sons in Naples, encouraged them to go on in the name of the Lord, and prayed for them without ceasing. On looking at the plans of the new church he observed that Tarugi was copying too closely the Church of S. John of the Florentines, which was so familiar and so dear to him, and we read in the letter written by his

[1] There was formed also a congregation of boys of noble family; but these, of course, took but a small part in the great work of the hospital; it served to train them in habits of religion and charity, and to fit them for future service. Amongst its earliest members was our own beloved Sant' Alfonso de' Liguori, who was afterwards enrolled in the first congregation, that of nobles and magistrates, and who was for many years the penitent of one of the fathers of the Oratory.

[2] The great extension and renewed life of this great work of mercy in the last few years are due to the zeal and charity of F. Raffaelle Buonanno of the Naples Oratory.

direction: "Father Philip says you must take care what you are doing, for in the church of S. Giovanni there have been pointed out many faults."

Of all this grand and fruitful activity S. Philip was the life and soul. So boundless were the love and the reverence with which his sons looked up to him that they never moved a step but under his guidance. And, in addition to this, from the moment when he gave his consent to the new foundation, it was his wish and resolve that the two Congregations should be really one, and the two houses one house. They were not simply sister Congregations, nor was that of Naples only the daughter of the mother house of Rome; in Philip's intention they were absolutely one. They continued to be one as long as the saint lived, and it was not until 1612, seventeen years after his death, that this oneness of life and of government ceased; but these thirty years and more of a common life had done all that S. Philip meant them to do, and left deeply impressed on both congregations the image of their blessed Founder.

Although Philip shrank with the greatest repugnance from enlarging the sphere of his rule, yet, for the sake of the Congregation of Naples, he consented in 1587 to be chosen *Preposito generale*, or Superior-general of the Oratory. He had no intention of appointing for all time a Superior-general of the several Oratories which might spring up; he meant only to govern the Congregation of Naples himself, as forming one body with that of the Vallicella.[1] Only the year before, the congregation had passed a decree to the

[1] This same grace was afterwards accorded to the small and short-lived House of S. Severino in the Marches, and to that of Lanciano; but this arrangement was noted as altogether exceptional, and made for very special reasons.

effect that it was no part of its duty to take charge of new Oratories, but only to aid them so far as it could, leaving each to govern itself in absolute independence. In regard of Naples, Philip appointed a Rector to represent him in the congregation; but he ordered that the fathers of Naples should take direct part in the government of the Vallicella, and those of Rome in the government of Naples. Thus when the elections prescribed by the rule were held in Rome, the fathers of Naples gave their votes either in person or by writing; and S. Philip issued his precepts and injunctions to the fathers of Naples precisely as he did to those of Rome. So long as he lived, no one was admitted into the Congregation of Naples without his approval, after minute and careful consideration; and thus we find him objecting to one postulant that he was too old, and that "old wood was hard to bend," and others who were very young he would not receive "by reason of the instability of their time of life, the great difficulty of educating and forming them, and the risk of their turning out sickly and weak." Not the slightest change was made by Tarugi in the usages of Rome without being examined and approved by Philip. The saint was, in bodily presence, at the Vallicella, but in soul and spirit he was as much in Naples, for his sons hung upon him for everything, and regarded their work as his and not their own.

In the archives of the Naples Oratory there is a large collection of letters, written by Philip's command during the earlier years of the new Congregation. The saint himself was never much given to writing letters, and as he grew older he employed one of the fathers, generally the secretary of the congregation, to write in his name. He never, however, allowed a letter to

be sent off without having it read to him, and he very often directed changes and corrections to be made. And thus this collection expresses with the closest accuracy the mind of S. Philip, the exquisite beauty of his soul, and the inexhaustible tenderness of his affection for his sons. The letters are many; they reveal to us the loving interest taken by the fathers of Rome in the congregation of Naples; there runs throughout them a tone of brotherly affection most graceful and charming; they relate with great minuteness of detail all that was doing in Rome; and they show us the bright glad spirit of the first companions of S. Philip. They enter into everything that is done at Naples just as if they were present, sharing every passing sadness and rejoicing in every success; nowhere can we find a truer and more living reflexion of the spirit of S. Philip. Sometimes we see that Philip is burning with the desire to go to Naples, and see with his own eyes the great things that were doing. Thus F. Bordini writes to Tarugi: "Father Philip would have come in person, as was settled, if he could have done so without scruple of conscience." F. Bozio, who had been in Naples, and had not forgotten it, says: "Father Philip exults greatly in beholding the close conformity and perfect union of our houses. . . . All the fathers are filled with gladness at the progress you are making, especially Father Philip, who is always questioning me about you and your doings. And, of course, I do not fail to tell him everything, all the fruit of your labours you have hitherto gathered in, and the sure hope of still more abundant fruit as time goes on." We find Philip incessantly entreating the Naples fathers, and especially the novices, to pray for him. He knows them all, gives them advice from

time to time about their ailments, encourages them, blesses them, and tells them that he holds them treasured in his heart. In a letter written in 1587 at his dictation by Gallonio, and signed by the saint himself, he says to Tarugi: "Hold yourself ready, in any case, to come hither at once if God should will to call me to Himself, that you may take on your shoulders the burden I now bear." And in another letter: "Remember me as you know how to *messeri* Antonio, Tommaso, Francesco, and Marzio, and all the rest of them, and tell them not to forget me. As for myself, I say it not to flatter you, but in perfect sincerity, although such things are very distasteful to me, I should look on it as a great thing if I could come to you, and add my weight to yours in freeing you from the vexations and squabbles you speak of." And then Gallonio concludes thus: "After reading this present letter to our Father, he bids me add: Write that they are to go on praying for me and for my tooth-ache, for the medicine I have taken to-day has left me very weak." Very touching, too, are the expressions of his loving anxiety about the health of his sons. Thus in a letter addressed to Tarugi we read: "Father Philip desires that your reverence would not work so hard lest you should break down entirely, and thus ruin the work in Naples, and deal a rude blow to ours in Rome. . . . Father Philip forbids your reverence, who is now getting up in years, and Carli, to preach so loud and with so much energy, for if you do you will not last long."

One of these letters written by F. Germanico Fedeli to Tarugi is too beautiful to be omitted. "F. Philip feels great consolation in hearing that you are taking a little rest, and that your doctor has made you run away from

Naples as the only way of escaping work. He says you must have no scruple of conscience about it, still less allow yourself to fret, until you have quite recovered your strength and got rid of that weakness of stomach. For he says if your former state of health is for the service and glory of God He will give it you back; and if He rather wills your present state of weakness you must resign yourself to it, and take it as a lawful excuse from your excessive labours. You must take advantage of this rest to preserve yourself in health for the sake of the work; for if you were to fail us, who knows what turn things might take! He lays it on your conscience to take all possible measures to lengthen out your life. . . . God give our father the joy of seeing you once more in health, and able to carry on the work for many years to come! This is why he prays and entreats you so urgently. I have written this all in his name, and he bids me salute your reverence and the others with all the love of his heart." On one occasion F. Borla had fallen ill from over-fatigue, and was at first supposed to be dying. Tarugi was still in Rome, and wrote him at Philip's request a letter as instructive as it is touching. He says: "I congratulate you in the name of the reverend Father Philip and of all the fathers and brothers of the congregation; as you may imagine, our joy is all the greater because the last account we had of you was so discouraging. . . . God has given you good will, He has given you knowledge and ability, and He has put you into a field in which you might gather much fruit; but if you do not go on with more prudence and reflexion you will not last long, and you will not gather in the fruit of your toil. I bid you in the name of F. Philip and all the congregation to take a suitable room for yourself, to

apportion to each father and brother his office and work, and to give them the food and the recreation they need. The father commands you not to get up in the night, and to go to bed at such a time that you may have seven clear hours of rest. He commands you also to take at least half-an-hour's recreation after dinner, and more or less as nature may require. Do not let any of you imagine that this our life is a life of ease; for he who toils so much and in so many ways as a good priest is obliged to do, saying office and mass, meditating, studying, preaching, exhorting, confessing, wears himself out so quickly, that if he does not take proper food and rest he soon falls under his burden; or if he does not fall, he unfits himself for the exercises of the spiritual life. Therefore, be sure you take all you need in food and drink, in clothing and in sleep. If you must commit some excess, let it be in meekness and patience, in humility and charity, for excesses of that kind will do you good. All bodily exercises, such as fasting, vigils, and other privations and inflictions, are good when they are used as means, subordinated to charity and the other interior virtues of the soul. Take care not to return to your work, unless you are sure that your illness is quite gone, and your strength quite restored. Otherwise, be sure we shall not let you stay where you are, only to wear yourself out." One of the most touching indications of Philip's affection for the Congregation of Naples is that found in these words of Baronio to the fathers: "Do not fail to pray very specially for the health of Father Philip, for he has great confidence in you all, and above all in the fervour which novices are wont to have, or ought to have. . . . We are beyond measure delighted with what F. Pompeo writes us of the good order observed in your holy house. I have

shown the letter to Father Philip, and he was very much pleased with it. So keep yourselves in great gladness of heart, *pater amat vos.*" On the other hand, the fathers of Naples, who had torn themselves with regret from their beloved father, cherished a hope that he might be induced to come for a time amongst them. Thus F. Giovenale Ancina tried to draw the saint to Naples by setting forth all its natural beauties, and wrote thus to one of the fathers in Rome: "Tell F. Philip that if he comes here he will find a climate of exquisite temperature, scenes of exceeding beauty, views of surpassing charm, a perfect air—in short, a little earthly paradise; all is perfect—sea and mountains, hills and plains, the city and the solitude, conversations, Oratory, house, sons, grandsons, and great grandsons, and good music, both of voice and instruments."[1] But, in spite of every inducement, it was not the will of God that Philip should leave Rome; his influence at the great centre of religion was greater and more abiding.

In one of the preceding letters S. Philip makes allusion to certain vexations and squabbles by which Tarugi was harassed. From other letters we learn that one of these arose out of a donation, made to the Congregation by a gentleman whose name was Fabrizio di Milano, and contested by his family. The vexations were necessarily many; the congregation was increasing in numbers and in reputation; many were eager to be admitted into it who were in various ways unfitted for it; and then came, as was very usual in those days, a great many proposals of bequests, burdened with obligations of various kinds. Our saint had always lived in

[1] *Vita del Venerabile Giovenale Ancina*, by Aniceto Ferrante, of the Naples Oratory, now a bishop *in partibus*. Lib. ii. cap. 7, p. 445.

extreme poverty, and detached from everything in the world, and he felt ill at ease amidst all this worldly business; and after the labours of his ministry and his many prayers he felt it an intolerable weariness. Doubtless these many temporal affairs, and the increasing wealth of the Congregation in Naples, were ordered by God as a further trial and proof of his virtue; but he always regarded them as the most annoying and difficult duties of his state, and submitted to them with great natural reluctance. To this should be added that his health began, after his seventieth year, to be very uncertain, so that at times his sons apprehended that they were about to lose him; while at other times they were surprised at the robustness and vigour of his green old age. We have already spoken of a serious illness he had in 1585. Now, on the 29th March of the following year, F. Bordini writes to Tarugi: "The progress of the Oratory gives us all the greatest pleasure, but some of us cannot help fearing, because it seems impossible that the work can continue long at such a height of prosperity. The father is very well, and went the day before yesterday to the vineyard with Signora Lavinia. Everything in the house is going on quietly." And then in May he writes: "Father Philip, in my opinion, and from what he says himself, is far from well, and yet he will not lessen his bodily activity nor his application of mind, though he is worried with so many law-papers and other troubles. Yesterday the archbishop of Turin came to see us, to his great delight, as he himself said."

Just at this time occurred an event which we cannot pass over in silence, and which attests the loving care with which S. Philip watched over the Congregation of Naples. We have already mentioned the name of the

abbate Navarro, who gave the fathers the small house of S. Martino, with its adjoining church, when first they came to Naples. About this time the *abbate*, whose devotion to S. Philip was boundless, resolved to resign into the hands of the Pope an abbey which he held in the Abruzzo, and entreated the Holy Father to bestow it on S. Philip, and annex it to the Oratory. It was called the Abbey of S. Giovanni in Venere, and its abbot exercised jurisdiction, both spiritual and temporal, over many parishes. Pope Sixtus V. greatly approved this proposal, and by a Bull issued in July 1585 annexed it in perpetuity to the Congregation. Philip did not oppose the will of the Pope, but he accepted with very great reluctance both the duties and the income of this new charge. The responsibility of episcopal jurisdiction on the one hand, and the administration of so many temporal affairs on the other, disquieted him greatly; but he shrank from appearing disobedient to the Pope, and ungrateful to a benefactor so dear to him as was Navarro. Perhaps, too, he deemed it prudent not to deprive the rapidly-increasing congregation of a benefice which had come to it unsought, and which might be regarded as a gift from the Lord. For the rule of the abbey he appointed as his vicars Navarro himself and F. Talpa, and on the death of Navarro he entrusted it to F. Talpa alone. During his administration F. Talpa conferred many benefits on the faithful under his jurisdiction, in the name of S. Philip; he gave them just and equitable laws, and erected a seminary in obedience to the decree of the Council of Trent. Philip rejoiced in the great good that was done, but still he could never bring himself to think of the abbey without a sense of uneasiness and discomfort. Thus F. Bordini writes to Tarugi: "*In primis et ante omnia,*

first and foremost, Father Philip feels that this abbey is a tremendous burden; it seems to him that he has on his shoulders the charge of an enormous bishopric, and so indeed it is. But for his regard for the Signore *abbate* (Navarro) we should not be able to keep him from resigning it at once into the hands of his Holiness." But S. Philip patiently bore this his heavy cross for the good of the congregation of Naples. So early as 1587 he resolved that the fathers of Naples should receive and enjoy the whole income of the abbey, and in 1593 the Roman Congregation passed a decree as follows: "Decreed, that our Fathers in Naples take charge of the abbey in the Abruzzo as they have done hitherto; and that until further order be taken therein, they receive its revenues and expend them for their house, more especially for the novitiate."

And now, if we would fully appreciate the work of S. Philip in Naples, we must pause awhile to look at the four fathers who founded the congregation there, and who reflected so vividly and so fully the virtues of their Father and Master.

With Tarugi we have become well acquainted and almost familiar. We have seen how he was formed by S. Philip to piety and the love of God, and how he and Baronio were for a very long time the main instruments of all the saint's greatest works; and we have seen him in Naples, and the great things he did there. He was a man who in the depth and tenderness of his affections closely resembled S. Philip. His large and gentle heart made him eloquent; and although no fragments of his sermons are preserved, we know that the saint distinguished him amongst the fathers as the *dux verbi*, the prince of preachers of the word of God. One counsel of his, however, to the younger

fathers of Naples has been always remembered: "The word uttered by the lips goes as far as the ears; the word uttered from the heart never stops till it has reached another heart."

His greatness as a priest, and the warmth of his affections, are strikingly shown in the latter years of his eventful life. In 1592, as we shall see, the Pope decided that Tarugi should be appointed Archbishop of Avignon and Cardinal of holy Church. He thus found himself constrained by obedience to leave his beloved congregation of Naples, and his letters reveal to us his immense grief at this separation. In the first of his letters to the fathers of Naples he says: "Prostrate before God, and with my mouth in the dust, I crave pardon of my great immortification, and of the evil example I am giving. I pray you not to forget me, but to keep alive in your hearts the memory of this poor afflicted old man. As you read you will see what tears I have shed over this letter, which indeed I can scarcely see to write for weeping. I write from Rome in body, but my heart is all in Naples." In another letter he addresses the whole congregation thus: "I do not know what you feel about this separation of the head from the body and all the members of your dear and blessed house of Naples. The more intense the love that bound me to you, and it was always far greater than I was able to express, the more bitter is my grief now. When shall I again see, unhappy old man that I am, a family and congregation of more than forty persons dealing together in such charity and peace, all of whom loved me from their hearts as I well knew, and whom I so greatly loved, that at table and in choir and wherever we were gathered together, I could never tire of looking at them again and again, and delighting

in them, and admiring them, and glorifying God, whose gift it is that the children of peace and of love dwell together in unity in His house. I do not know whether I am to say with S. Paul: *I know that you shall see my face no more;* that will be as God wills. Help me, my reverend fathers and brothers, unite yourselves with me in spirit, and in prayer, and in love of toil in the service of God. If we are torn from each other in body, let us ever draw ourselves more closely together with the bond of christian and brotherly affection. Stand firm and fear nothing. Trust in God that His loving providence will give you increase in numbers and in virtue, in merit in His eyes, and in favour with men. . . . Keep yourselves, reverend fathers and most tenderly beloved sons and brothers, united in holy peace; look on those who rule over you as the instruments of God who is leading and guiding you; serve them and obey them in God, and let each put his shoulder to the burden. You see what power there is in the arms of sailors when they pull all together; even so a manifold cord is not easily broken. A brother whom another brother helps at need is as a strong city. . . . Prayer, mortification of your own passions, practised under obedience and with readiness to suffer, the daily renewal of your good resolutions, a great distrust of yourselves, and a boundless, unhesitating trust in God, these will found your house on the solid rock beyond the reach of stormy rain and wind. . . . If we see each other never again on earth I trust we shall see one another in heaven. I cast my arms about the neck of all and each of you, and kiss you on both cheeks with many tears. Good-bye, till we meet in Paradise."

Such was the love of Tarugi for the Oratory and the Congregation of Naples that even, amidst his labours and

success as bishop, he was always yearning to return to it and to live in it as a novice; and when he was Cardinal he still sighed for his place and work of former days, and his heart ached that he could not return to them. Such was Tarugi, a man so richly endowed in mind and heart, that we cannot wonder that he was the son of Philip's predilection.

F. Borla was a man of different stamp. All his life long he was consumed with an insatiable zeal for work. He had not Tarugi's eloquence, nor his warm loving heart; but his whole life was devoted to the good of others, and if S. Philip had not restrained him he would probably have worn himself out with toil before his time. He was born at Piacenza in 1537, of noble and wealthy parents, and had the great blessing of being intimate in his youth with S. Charles Borromeo, to whose cardinalitial court, as it was then called, he was called in 1561. From the court of S. Charles he passed into that of the Cardinal of Aragon, and in both he was a pattern of piety and virtue. While he was living in Rome he came within the sphere of Philip's marvellous attraction, and began to yearn for a more perfect life. After a while he entreated to be received amongst the sons of our saint, and was aggregated to that congregation of priests which, although not as yet canonically established, lived in obedience and devotion to Philip. F. Borla's love of the saint knew no limits, and his one effort was to walk in his steps; he devoted himself more especially to the care of the sick in the hospitals with an unwearying charity. When, however, the blessed Paul of Arezzo was appointed bishop of Piacenza by Pius V., he greatly desired to take with him to his see, amongst others, F. Borla, who was a native of that city, and a man of such great zeal, ability, and influ-

ence. The blessed Paul knew and loved S. Philip. He scarcely ventured at first to ask the saint to give up a man who was doing so much in Rome, and who was so great an ornament of the rising Congregation; but at length, trusting in Philip's great goodness of heart, he *humbly asked him for Borla*, say the memoirs of the time, *as a loan*. Philip granted this request, and F. Borla instantly obeyed the two saints, who united in exacting from him this costly sacrifice. At Piacenza he displayed all the resources of his zeal, and gave great edification to the whole city. He set the episcopal house and family on a good and religious footing; reformed the confraternity of the Trinity; founded a convent of *Convertite* for the care of fallen women; co-operated in erecting a house of the order of Somascha for orphan boys, and a second house for girls; established for various works of charity a congregation of Capuchin seculars; and, during the Jubilee of 1575, strove to emulate in Piacenza the great work S. Philip had founded in Rome. On these works he expended the whole of his rich patrimony, reserving for himself, or rather for the poor, only the income of some small ecclesiastical benefices.

In 1576 the Blessed Paul was made Cardinal, and transferred to the archiepiscopal see of Naples. As he passed through Rome he felt he could not ask S. Philip to lend him F. Borla for a longer time, and yet he could not bring himself to give him up. He loved him greatly; he had seen the great good he had done; and at length he summoned up courage and entreated Philip for a renewal of his invaluable *loan*. The saint a second time granted this request, and thus subserved the designs of divine Providence by sowing in Naples the first seeds of the new congregation, while he

teaches us at the same time how wide in his idea was the range of the work of the Oratory. A year later Cardinal d'Arezzo closed his labours with a holy death, and F. Borla was preparing to return to Rome, when Philip sent him an order to remain in Naples, to evade the importunity of several cardinals who wished to have in their courts an administrator so zealous and so holy. And thus we find F. Borla in Naples. He took up his abode at first in a little room at the Hospital of the Annunziata, and amazed the city with the marvels of his charity. He reformed the hospital and its infirmary, and made provision for the wants of its six hundred inmates. Then, on the urgent request of the governors of the Hospital of the *Incurabili*, he removed thither, and reformed its whole temporal administration, while he provided for the spiritual wants and consolation of the sick. He discharged in person the most menial and repulsive services, and succeeded in founding, for the care of the infirm men, the Congregation *del Buon Conforto*, and the nuns of the *Good Death* for the women. He also reformed with admirable prudence and almost incredible exertions, the monastery of the *Convertite*. His life was first attempted, and then his virtue assailed, by one of those unhappy women whom his reforms irritated; but he succeeded in converting her to a life of penitence and virtue. He also founded in Aquila a monastery for the care of fallen women. Such were the labours by which a son of S. Philip made known to the Neapolitans the zeal and the charity of his father; and thus F. Borla was, in the intention of divine Providence, the forerunner and herald of the Oratory in Naples.

When F. Borla came to live with the other fathers in the new house at Naples, his zeal and his activity

knew no limits. It seemed as if his presence were miraculously multiplied, so numerous were the works of his charity; and meanwhile he lived a life of most austere penance. He wore a shirt of hair, took the discipline with unusual frequency and severity, fasted rigorously, and seemed to pass his nights either in prayer, or at the bedside of the sick and dying. He never missed the Oratory, attended the confessional assiduously, preached often, and took his full share in the manifold life of the Congregation; and yet he found time for an apostolate of charity not unworthy of S. Philip. He seemed, to the Neapolitans, to be everywhere; his thin pale features, and his worn, poorly-clad frame, were known wherever there was a want to be relieved, or a sorrow to be soothed. He was once known to give his own bed to a poor woman in want; and on another occasion, when he had been over-persuaded to buy a new cassock, his heart smote him, and he gave it away to a poor person, and joyfully put on the old patched cassock again. He was lavish both of alms and of spiritual assistance to the poor prisoners, and visited them continually; he founded, in co-operation with the Signora del Carretto,[1] the hospital of S. Eligio, placing it under the care of the monastery, and drawing up admirable rules for its management. By his efforts, the Congregation of the *Fate-bene* brothers were brought to Naples, as well as the religious, who devote them-

[1] The Signora del Carretto had an income of twenty-two thousand crowns, of which she spent sixteen thousand in works of charity. For the Refuge alone she gave thirty-seven thousand crowns. See *Marciano*, lib. ii. cap. i. p. 82. The Duchess of Maddaloni also, the Signora Giulia delle Castelle, and other ladies, gave large sums to the fathers; who, true to the spirit of S. Philip, never asked for money, and were rather importuned to accept it. And thus we find that the Signora del Carretto, who bequeathed eighty thousand crowns to F. Borla, for works of charity, used to call him laughingly *il superbo*, because he would never stoop to ask for money.

selves to the care of the sick; he found means to defray all the expenses of their journey, and of their lodging and maintenance until their houses were ready for their reception. He also founded the monastery *del Refugio*, a refuge for outcast children of abandoned mothers. We are lost in amazement as we look at the many works of religion and of charity which sprang up in Naples towards the decline of the sixteenth century; and interwoven with them all we are sure to find the name of that marvellous son of S. Philip, F. Borla.

F. Talpa was one of the fathers who came to Naples with Tarugi. He represented, in his character and life, the mystical and interior side of S. Philip's sanctity. He was of a stamp entirely different from Tarugi and Borla, but always most closely one with them in mind and heart. Antonio Talpa was born at Sanseverino in the Marches. In his youth he wrote Latin and Italian verse which Annibale Caro condescended to praise, and was known amongst his friends as *il poetino*, the little poet. He distinguished himself at the University of Perugia by his talents and application, and obtained the degree of doctor. And then came on him the longing to give himself up entirely to God and to serve Him in the priesthood. He was a man of very vigorous mind and wide culture; but his distinguishing quality was a rare prudence. S. Philip called him *il prudente*, and sometimes said that, because of his marvellous prudence, he was his right hand. S. Charles had a very great affection for him; and valued his prudence so highly that he often consulted him on the affairs of his diocese, and on the rule of his Oblates. S. Philip would never come to a decision on any matter of importance without knowing all that F. Talpa had to say about it. Now this prudence and wariness were in

F. Talpa the result of the combination of a very clear understanding stored with well-digested learning, and a natural character which, under the action of grace, seemed the very home of peace. He loved solitude, and had not God brought him across the path of S. Philip he would perhaps have lived as a hermit in some retired nook of the Marches; he had, indeed, once made the attempt to do so in the Church of S. Maria, at the foot of Chiente. But the mighty attraction of S. Philip constrained him, as it had constrained so many others, and in 1571 he was to his great joy admitted into the Congregation. From that moment he gave himself up without reserve into the hands of our holy father, and was not only his disciple and penitent, but his most faithful imitator. The spirit of S. Philip passed into him so fully, that he was at first associated with the saint in the government of the Congregation of Rome, and was then for more than twenty years the superior of that of Naples. But his nature, though sanctified, was not changed. His humility was so great as to appear excessive; he carefully concealed his great gifts and his learning, and wrung from the fathers by his importunity the permission to abstain from preaching.[1] He was a man of very few words, and marvellously recollected and self-possessed. During the fifteen years he passed in Rome no one ever saw him going about the city; and for the thirty-five years he lived in Naples he was scarcely ever known to go out of the house. Although he was always intently occupied in the various works of his ministry, he seemed to live always gathered up

[1] Some of his sermons are preserved in the Archives of the Naples Congregation, and we see from them that as a preacher he was certainly not equal to Tarugi.

into himself, like a hermit. It was said of him that it never happened to him to suffer the least distraction, either in prayer or at mass. He was naturally inclined to be rigid, and his great love for the Congregation made him a very minute and exacting guardian of its every rule and custom. But his very rigour was tempered with such meekness, and there was so much kindness and gentleness in his zeal for the observance of the rule, that it was manifest the spirit of S. Philip rested upon him. One of his sayings seems to me worth preserving: "I have made it a rule to myself, and I try to keep it whenever I receive an admonition; and it is this—either the things for which the admonition is given me are true, or they are not true; in the former case, I accept them with purpose of amendment, and in the latter case, I accept them as a warning to take care lest I fall into them hereafter." What peace and simplicity breathe in this rule of life!

Yet this man, so humble and apparently severe, so sparing of words, and so withdrawn into himself, was, as an Oratorian, a man of prodigious activity and energy. He took part in every work of charity, gave abundant alms, and was full of compassion for every distress. In the confessional his words were with power, and gained for God, and led on to holiness, a vast number of souls; in one province alone, there were counted fifty Dominican fathers who had been his penitents. He aided F. Borla most efficaciously in all his great works, especially those undertaken to reclaim fallen women; he drew up for him the rule of the *Refugio*, and had a very large part in the establishment of the Barnabite fathers in the house of S. Maria in Cosmedin. He himself, with the help of four illustrious penitents of his, Cassandra Caracciolo, Ippolita and Caterina Ruffo, and Caterina

Tomacelli, founded the monastery of S. Giuseppe de' Ruffo, and drew up its rule. By his persevering entreaties, he got from S. Philip permission to found a Congregation of the Oratory in his native town, Sanseverino. In obedience to the saint, he for many years watched over the spiritual and temporal interests of the Abbey of the Abruzzo; and for many more he ruled as superior a college of young Poles established in Rome. To him Philip confided the care of the conscience of that great servant of God, S. Camillo of Lellis. Solitary and hermit-like as were his tastes, he was a man of ripe culture, whose one object was to hide his knowledge. He has left a great many manuscripts in which he treats of questions of the greatest difficulty with the security and precision of a master;[1] and from his universal knowledge, he received from S. Philip the charge of the formation of the great Vallicella library. To him the learned F. Bozio sent his works for revision and correction, sheet by sheet, as they issued from the press; and he was bound in the closest ties of friendship with Baronio, the most learned beyond all question of S. Philip's disciples. Of all the fathers, whether in Naples or in Rome, his dearest, most intimate friend was Cesare Baronio, who on his side placed the greatest confidence

[1] The manuscripts of these treatises are preserved with care in the archives of the Congregation of Naples. One of them treats on the Confessors of Nuns, another on the Discipline of Regulars, and a third of great value on Bishops and the improvement of the discipline of the clergy. This last treatise was shown by the Cardinal di Monreale to the Pope in 1607, and the Cardinal wrote to F. Talpa as follows: "Your treatise on Bishops was by me presented to our Lord the Pope, and from what he said, I gather that the substance of it pleases him, but that he sees very great difficulty in the application of it in these our times. Nevertheless he will bear it in his memory, and urges you to seek some expedient in this matter for the service of God and of Holy Church." This letter shows us that S. Philip had breathed into his disciples his own ardent desire for a good and holy reformation of the clergy, the work to which he had consecrated his whole soul and life.

in his judgment, and in many ways manifested his predilection for him. Though F. Talpa was in Naples, and communication was not easy, Baronio consulted him continually about his Annals, and about the notes to the Martyrology ; to him he had recourse in every perplexity, and although he was in correspondence with the most learned men of Europe, he never printed a word which had not been stamped with F. Talpa's approval. When appointed Cardinal, he lays himself at F. Talpa's feet, and writes to him thus: "Perform in my regard the office of master and corrector, for nothing is more necessary for those who must live at court." And while Bozio consults him on intricate questions of theology, and Baronio on perplexed points of history, F. Talpa was deemed in his day an architect of such pure taste that his advice was sought in regard of some of the noblest works of art. To him was entrusted the building of the Chiesa Nuova from its foundations, and to him the Naples Oratory owes in great part the noble and admirable church of the Girolamini. It is true that the initiative of this stately church is due to Tarugi, but it was F. Talpa who completed it in a few years, with a marvellous grandeur of conception, and the taste and devotedness of an artist.

The fourth of the fathers who took part in the foundation of the Naples Oratory is the venerable Giovenale Ancina, a man moulded on the type of S. Philip, and whom the Sacred Congregation, in the cause of his beatification, declares to have practised the Christian virtues in a heroic degree. But while in many respects he so closely resembles S. Philip, there were many points of difference and even of contrast. The Blessed Giovenale Ancina lived in the world, as did S. Philip, for

thirty-five years; but whereas Philip lived in loneliness and poverty, in prayer and works of charity, Ancina lived amidst the occupations and refinements of the world. He was a poet of considerable merit, writing both Latin and Italian verse with ease; he was deeply read in philosophy, practised medicine with much success and reputation, and was professor in the University of Turin. His warm and imaginative temperament made him exquisitely sensitive to the power of music, and while hearing the *Dies Iræ* sung in a church he resolved to give up the world, and consecrate himself entirely to the service of God. He went to Rome with only vague and indeterminate yearnings of soul; but when he saw S. Philip, it was as though he beheld the face of an angel; he at once placed himself unreservedly in the hands of the saint, and was admitted into the Oratory together with his brother Giovan Matteo. On the day of his admission Baronio said, "To-day we have much reason to bless the Lord, for we have gained another S. Basil."

Giovenale's life as an Oratorian was in all respects admirable. His natural character predisposed and qualified him to follow closely in the steps of his master, and the energy of his will never flagged or failed, so that in a very few years he was regarded as a finished disciple of our saint. He was sent to Naples in 1586, and remained there ten years, during which he contributed greatly to the growth and prosperity of the rising Congregation. We cannot now speak of the perfection of his interior life, nor of the miracles he was believed to have wrought. His obedience to Tarugi, and afterwards to F. Talpa, superiors of the Congregation, was unaffected, prompt, universal, and from the heart; and his one effort was to impress on the

Congregation the image of its founder. He laboured constantly in the hospitals, in visiting the poor, in the confessional, and above all in preaching. His sermons, like those of Tarugi, attracted large crowds of the faithful, and led to many striking conversions. His style was, as befits the Oratory, familiar and chastened; but his sermons were rich in instruction, and glowing with fervid eloquence. He said he thought it necessary in Naples to make the substance of his sermons more theological, and their style more elevated, "to adapt one's self to the taste of the Neapolitans, who like very solid matter, and look for some elegance of form." And thus he had great influence as a preacher of unusual power and eloquence. He taught theology to the novices, was very successful in reclaiming the most utterly fallen women, and found time to write many madrigals, hymns, and *Laudi*, which were set to music and sung in the Oratory. His love of music is, indeed, one of the points in which his character approaches that of S. Philip. It is said of him that he converted, amongst others, a singer of remarkable power, who was living an abandoned life; and of her he writes that "now, instead of those her earlier vanities she sings only devout *Laudi* and hymns, with a voice and expression so sweet, that one seems to be listening rather to an angel of heaven than to a creature of earth." Like S. Philip, he strove to use music for its highest end; and it is through his persevering exertions that the idea of our saint in regard of the spiritual and sanctifying power of music was so deeply implanted in the Oratory of Naples.

When F. Ancina was constrained by the supreme authority of the Pope to become bishop of Salluzzo he showed us by what means a son of S. Philip may sanc-

tify himself in that high position, and how mighty and efficacious in a bishop are the charity, the sweetness, and the humility learned in the school of our saint; and he gives us some faint notion of what S. Philip would have been as a bishop. His close and affectionate friendship with S. Francis of Sales gave him for an example a saint of exquisite gentleness of charity, who was in so many respects like S. Philip.

Hence we see that while Philip was living in Rome, absorbed in God, and in the manifold works of his holy ministry, he was effecting wonderful things in Naples by means of his beloved sons of the Oratory. He loved them greatly, and to the day of his death followed their every movement with the eye of a father; neither the languor of old age, nor his relinquishment of the office of Superior, lessening his affectionate interest in the congregation of Naples. In every letter down to the eve of his death, we find the same yearning love and the same tender solicitude for the welfare and health of all. From time to time, indeed, we meet with some few words of admonition, when he noticed any departure from uniformity in the customs of the two houses. He felt some fear lest "a diversity of life and customs might, in course of years, lead to diversity of aims and the weakening of unity." But these very admonitions are of inestimable value, as revelations to us of the idea and wish of the saint, and of his great and ever watchful love.

And now it is time to return once more to Rome and follow the life of our beloved saint in his more immediate sphere and home.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CAPUCHINS—S. FELICE OF CANTALICE, S. CAMILLUS OF LELLIS, BLESSED LEONARDI, AND CARDINAL FREDERIC BORROMEO.

We have seen that S. Philip was more or less connected in friendship with many saints, his contemporaries, and especially with S. Ignatius, S. Pius V., S. Charles Borromeo, and the blessed Alessandro Sauli. We have but few records of his relations with them, but we can dimly represent to ourselves the joy of a saint in the affectionate and heavenly friendship of other saints. And now that we have reached the pontificate of Sixtus V., we find Philip in the midst of a new generation of saints. S. Ignatius and S. Pius V. had been long dead, and S. Charles passed to his reward in 1585, the year in which Gregory XIII. died. The blessed Alessandro Sauli lived far from Rome, labouring to convert and sanctify Corsica, the allotted sphere of his apostolate. Yet in the old age of S. Philip, we find grouped around him a goodly crown of saints, and of others who, although not canonized by the Church, shed lustre upon it by their sanctity and their learning.

We have seen, too, how many men of rare merit and virtue lived under the shadow of Philip's guidance, in the congregation of the Oratory. The four fathers he sent to Naples, and then F. Flaminio Ricci, who took the place of Tarugi, are enough to show that few

saints have had about them so imposing an array of great men—men who were great because they lived near to God, and for God alone. In the Roman Oratory, besides Baronio, Gallonio, and the two brothers Bozio, were many other disciples of our saint, more or less illustrious for sanctity as well as knowledge. And there were many saints, not belonging to the Congregation of the Oratory, who yet lived in closest intimacy with its blessed founder, and who were in many ways his disciples. These were like choice flowers, which give out their fragrance and their loveliness to gladden the heart of him who planted and tended them. And amongst these we find S. Felice of Cantalice, S. Camillus of Lellis, the blessed Giovanni Leonardi, and the great Cardinal Frederic Borromeo, who, although not canonized, emulated the virtues both of S. Charles and S. Philip. Of these four great men three were for some time Philip's penitents, so that he had great part in the training of their souls to holiness, and they retained and showed the impress of his direction. We do not find that S. Felice of Cantalice was ever the penitent of our saint; and yet how beautiful is the picture of their friendship, and how many features of resemblance between the humble Capuchin lay-brother and the equally humble apostle of Rome. Widely different as were their lives, we find in both the same guilelessness and simplicity, and the same habit of divine contemplation.

When Philip left his uncle's wealth and gave himself wholly to God, we were reminded of S. Francis Assisi, and of some of the points of character common to those two great saints. And, as we have followed him in the way, it may have occurred to us that, in many other points, there was a striking resemblance between the

most poetic saint of the middle ages, and the fervent apostle of the sixteenth century. The great love which S. Philip bore to the seraphic S. Francis naturally made him love the Franciscans; and the memoirs of the time show that, among Franciscans, he had a manifest predilection for the Capuchins. Capuchins were always with him in the visits to the seven churches; Philip often went to pray in their church, and from time to time took the Capuchin novices for recreation into the grounds of some villa. The Capuchins were very frequent attendants at the Oratory, and F. Lupo, their most celebrated preacher, gave the warmest and most cordial praise to the sermons of Philip and his companions. One day, when the Capuchins, with Fra Felice and F. Lupo at their head, had resolved to prevent some obscene ribaldry of the carnival, S. Philip joined them with his Oratorians. They walked together in procession through the most frequented streets of Rome, and succeeded in their intent. We have seen that the Dominicans held the first place in Philip's heart; the Capuchins certainly held the second. The Dominicans were dear to our saint because of the memories of S. Marco of Florence and of Savonarola; the reasons of his love of the Capuchins were of another kind.

The master-thought of Philip's life was the holy and thorough reformation of the Church. Now, the first religious order[1] which strove to reform itself in the sixteenth century, by going back to the primitive purity of its rule, was the Franciscan, and the result of this effort was the order of Capuchins. In 1525, when Philip was hardly ten years old, and was beginning to

[1] The Camaldolese Reform of Monte Corona effected by F. Giustiniani began a few years sooner than the Franciscan, but it was not completed until some years later.

imbibe the spirit of piety at S. Marco, Matteo da Baschi or Bassi, a Friar Minor of the regular observance in the Marches, felt himself inflamed with a desire to reform his order. He resumed the hood, which he had seen on an image of S. Francis, and, with the approval of Pope Clement VII., he withdrew into a solitude with those friars who wished to adopt the strict Franciscan observance. He brought back the institute of the seraphic saint of Assisi to its primitive vigour, and he was followed by a great number. He met with many difficulties and much opposition; but the simple piety of these self-reforming friars, who were called Capuchins, from the hood (*caputium*) which they all wore, and, above all, the heroism of their charity in the plague of 1528, endeared them to the people. Their popularity was still great throughout S. Philip's apostolate in Rome, and he could not fail to reverence and love an order sprung from a longing for reform and for Christian perfection. Hence we understand why both Baronio and Tarugi, in the freshness of their religious fervour, wished to become Capuchins, and why S. Camillus of Lellis at first so perseveringly strove to enter that order. Another reason was, that the Capuchin reform made preaching one of its most especial aims; and we know that it was with the power of the Word of God that Philip set about the reform of the discipline of Holy Church and the overthrow of heresy.[1]

One of the earliest buds of the newly-formed Institute of the Capuchins was a simple lay-brother, whose name was Felice, and who was born in 1513 at Cantalice, a small hamlet of Rieti. His early years were

[1] These observations on the Capuchin Friars of the sixteenth century will help us to comprehend the grand figure of a Capuchin drawn by Manzoni in Fra Cristoforo.—*Manzoni, I Promessi Sposi.*

spent in keeping cattle, and in the labours of the fields, until in his thirty-sixth year he became a simple lay-brother amongst the Capuchin friars. Yet he was a great saint; Philip loved him greatly, delighted to converse with him, and was wont to point him out as a model of all perfection. Fra Felice knew little of earthly things; he could neither write nor read, but he possessed the true wisdom. With the aid of divine grace he knew how to love God and his neighbour better than many who are learned in many sciences; and in that science of good and evil which regards the spiritual life, his mind was an inexhaustible treasure of wealth. And hence Philip loved him so tenderly. If to this supernatural wealth there had been added the gifts of lofty genius and wide culture, Philip might perhaps have loved him yet more; but there was in Fra Felice enough to content and delight a soul like Philip's, enough to make him reverence and love the image of God so living and so bright in one of the lowliest of His creatures. In this century of ours we find it hard to understand and admire a saint of this stamp; and yet this form of saintliness has its touching beauties, and fascinates those who look habitually rather at God than at man.

Fra Felice collected alms for his convent for many years in Rome, and thus he became acquainted with Philip, through Persiano Rosa, while he was living in S. Girolamo della Carità. No sooner did the holy Capuchin know Philip than he loved him and venerated him greatly. He took great delight in going to S. Girolamo to take counsel with Philip on spiritual matters. When he saw him in the street or elsewhere, he would fall at his feet, kiss his hands, and humbly beg for his blessing; and then he would speak in his artless and

simple way of God and His holy love until his face shone, and his speech warmed into eloquence. Philip was beyond measure amazed, and at the same time affected, by this holy simplicity and this ardent love of God in a poor mendicant lay-brother; and by degrees he opened his whole soul to him as to a true and beloved friend. There grew up between them a great intimacy, of which the love of God was the one bond; and often while thus conversing their countenances would glow with a light that seemed supernatural. Though Philip was a priest, he would kneel for Fra Felice's blessing; then they would embrace each other, and separate with an eager desire to meet again. Fra Felice's occupation as collector of alms led him continually into the streets of Rome; and thus Philip, on his many errands of charity, fell in with him very often, and to their mutual edification and delight. Once, as Fra Felice was going towards Monte Cavallo, he saw Philip in the distance, and hastened to meet him with a face radiant with joy, prostrated himself at his feet and kissed his hands, without uttering a word. Philip then threw his arms around him and held him for a time in a cordial embrace; heart doubtless held converse with heart, but without one word they separated and each went his way, to the amazement and edification of those who were standing by.

On another occasion we are told that Fra Felice entered S. Philip's room and knelt for his blessing. Philip looked lovingly at him and then knelt down, begging the holy Capuchin to bless him this time. And thereupon ensued a loving contest of humility; each remained kneeling with his arms thrown around the other, until after a while both rose, and Fra Felice went on his way without a word.

As the saints apply to earthly things a standard of judgment different from that of the world, they often exhibit in their lives a certain eccentricity, an off-shoot of what S. Paul calls *the foolishness of the cross.* The eccentricities and extravagances of S. Philip are notorious amongst the records of the saints, and may be accounted for, partly by his natural disposition, and mainly by his great desire to mortify himself by every means, and to appear worthless and even contemptible in the eyes of men. Fra Felice was his ally and accomplice in many of those seeming extravagances. To express the great beauty and desirableness of suffering for the love of Christ, they would wish each other every kind of pain and torment, and they at times seemed to strive which should wish and almost imprecate on the other the keenest and most humiliating suffering, that so he might have the occasion of acquiring the greater merit.[1]

These great saints hungered for mortifications more eagerly than men of the world for honours and pleasures. One day, as Fra Felice was going along with his wallet on his back, he met Philip near the old Mint in the Via dei Banchi. After his accustomed signs of love and reverence Fra Felice asked: "Are you thirsty, F. Philip?"—"Yes," answered the saint.—"Well then, let me see if you are really a mortified man;" and taking a bottle from his wallet he handed it to Philip. The saint took it eagerly, and in sight of all the people he put the bottle to his lips and drank with evident relish and much deliberation, just as if he were really a great drinker. Some, doubtless, smiled in contempt;

[1] See Bacci, and the *Vita del B. Felice Cappucino*, by F. Marchese of the Roman Oratory. See also the life of the B. Felice, by Fra Francesco of Perugia.

but many said: "See, there is one saint giving another to drink."—When Philip had finished drinking he gave the bottle back to Fra Felice and said: "And now, let me see if you are really a mortified man;" and taking off his own hat he put it on the head of the saintly Capuchin, and added: "Now, go you along with that hat over your hood, and complete your round of begging." —"Very willingly," said Fra Felice, "only if the hat is taken from me you must bear the loss." He went his way accordingly with Philip's hat stuck awkwardly on his hood, and was soon followed by a crowd of children, laughing and shouting: "Look at Fra Felice with a hat on! Look at Fra Felice's hat!" Meanwhile he pursued his way quietly all through the Via del Pellegrino, until they reached S. Lorenzo in Damaso, when Philip took his hat again, and went his way.

S. Philip has left a striking proof of the affectionate veneration he felt towards Fra Felice. From some words written on the back of a picture by the celebrated painter d'Arpino, we conclude that Philip had given him a commission to paint for him a portrait of his beloved friend. D'Arpino did all that he could to obey Philip, for whom he had the greatest devotion, and succeeded at length with great difficulty; for Fra Felice, as might be supposed, absolutely refused to hear a word about his portrait. But one day, when he had come, as was his wont, to ask alms for his convent, the painter contrived to draw him into conversation, and while seeming to be only continuing his work, succeeded in getting an accurate and expressive likeness of him. The portrait thus furtively and hurriedly obtained was at once put into a frame and sent to S. Philip with a letter written on the back of it. The saint valued it highly, and on his death it came into the possession of

the Gaetani; it is now placed in an antique frame of ebony, and is regarded as one of the most precious treasures of the gallery of the Duke of Sermoneta.[1]

To Philip's great grief he lost his beloved friend in the May of 1587. In a letter to Tarugi, F. Bordini says, "Here in Rome people go on falling ill and dying. Fra Felice the Capuchin is dead, and all the city laments him. They kept him three days unburied, with great concourse of people and such devotion that they left him neither habit nor beard. He died on the Monday of Pentecost while they were holding the general chapter. . . . Nothing is talked about in Rome but Fra Felice, a man so lowly and almost despised in his lifetime."

The other saint, who lived in habits of affectionate friendship with S. Philip, was Camillo de Lellis; a great saint, but of a very different stamp from the poor Franciscan lay-brother. His outer man was of large proportions, unusually tall, muscular and robust; and the soul within all fire and impulse, as are the souls of Neapolitans. His father was a valiant soldier; and the son inherited his manliness and courage. However chastened and restrained by grace, he was naturally hasty and prone to anger; but he never transgressed the difficult command of Holy Scripture: *be angry and sin not.* His education had been very imperfect, and in his youth he lived a worldly and even sinful life.

[1] I owe my knowledge of this fact, and a copy of d'Arpino's letter, to the courtesy of the Duke of Sermoneta. The letter is hurriedly written, without capitals or stops, and runs as follows: "M. R. P. fra felice came I made him sit down and wait while they got the bread and alms I pretended to be doing something else and talked on to get a good look at him and managed to do him without his knowing it and send him to your reverence who will please bless me

to padre filippo neri
your most humble servant
Giuseppe de Cesare d'Arpino."

After his conversion his life was one of most austere penance, and he devoted himself with incredible zeal to works of charity, and especially to the service of the sick. When he came to Rome for the Jubilee of 1575 he was twenty-five years of age, and had already given himself up entirely to God. Shortly before this time his fervour had led him to take the habit of a Capuchin, but a painful wound in his leg had compelled him to leave the Order.

Once in Rome, he soon became acquainted with S. Philip, who was in 1575 held in universal esteem as a saint, and whose apostolate was so vast and so fruitful. Philip won his whole heart; he gave himself up to his direction, and was not only the penitent of our saint, but his disciple and beloved friend. As their intimacy increased, S. Philip saw that Camillo had in him the making of a great saint; he led him carefully on in the love of God, and encouraged his strong attraction to the service of the sick, so that ere long Camillo passed his whole life in the hospitals. He nevertheless still felt a burning desire to return to the austere and penitent life of a Capuchin friar; and at length finding the wound in his leg entirely healed, he urged Philip to give him permission to do so. He thought his holy confessor, who loved the Capuchins so much, would be delighted with this resolution; and the rather that in his humility he wished to remain a simple lay-brother, without aspiring to the priesthood. But to his great surprise Philip peremptorily refused the permission he asked; and seeing that Camillo could not still the longing of his heart, he said to him: "Don't do it, my son; the wound in your leg would come back again, and, much as you desire it, you would not be able to persevere in the Order." Camillo's nature was ardent

and impulsive; he paid but little attention to these prophetic words, deeming them perhaps only the expression of a fear, and so he did not obey. Once more he put on the Capuchin habit; the wound came back worse than ever; and once more he was compelled to leave the Franciscan Order. On his return from the monastery of Tagliacozzo he presented himself to Philip, not without some feeling of mortification; but the saint received him with his wonted benignity, and said only: "Didn't I tell you, my son, not to go back into that religion, because your wound would break out again, and you would not be able to persevere? Well, if you wish it, you may be my spiritual child again." Camillo thus found himself to his great joy under Philip's direction once more, but his impulsive nature gave him no rest. He tried again and again to become a Capuchin; he made one attempt to become one of the *Zoccolanti*, who wear sandals; nor did he fully acquiesce in S. Philip's decision until the Capuchins and other Franciscans declared formally that his wound incapacitated him from being ever again received into any of the branches of their order.[1]

At length Camillo saw clearly that it was not the will of God that he should be a friar, and then he gave himself humbly into S. Philip's hands, and obeyed him implicitly. His life was passed in the hospitals of Rome, and the wish grew strong within him to do something to relieve and console the sick all over the world. He began by acting as administrator of the Hospital of S. Giacomo; then he conceived the idea of forming, in connexion with that hospital, a Congregation of laics, devoted to the care of the sick; and at

[1] See Gallonio and Bacci, the *Vita di S. Camillo* by F. Sergio Cicatelli, and the other biographers of the saint.

length he resolved to institute for this end a congregation of priests, quite unconnected with the hospital. Camillo was living in the world, and he was, moreover, poor and without education; how could he hope to become a priest? Still his manly courage was not easily daunted; his yearning love of the poor, and the counsels of S. Philip, inspired him with a holy daring. He was more than thirty years of age; but he began to learn grammar, and then threw himself with ardour into theology and general literature; and having scraped together by alms a sufficient patrimony, he was ordained priest. All this was done, not simply with Philip's permission, but by his direction; he saw from the first the height of perfection to which his disciple might attain. Camillo was too energetic and too ardent to loiter in the work he had begun. Finding some difficulties in his work in the hospital of S. Giacomo he gave it up at once, and withdrew from it his companions, to the great grief and annoyance of Monsignor Cusano, at that time superior of the hospital. Monsignor Cusano rebuked him with great severity, and complained of him to S. Philip, whom he knew intimately; he said that Camillo had left the hospital without any just reason, and had taken away the best officers of it with him; and all because he had got into his head some stupid idea of an independent congregation of his own. Philip had not been consulted on this very serious step, and he therefore urged Camillo to go back to the hospital; it would be wrong to give offence to Cusano and the other directors of the hospital, who had no other end in view than the welfare of the sick.

It was a counsel dictated by the saint's prudence and humility, but Camillo argued against it, and refused to follow it. God was speaking to his heart, and

bidding him dare great things, and count all thought of men as nothing in comparison with the welfare of the sick and poor. And thus, he made reply: "I feel within me an immense energy to confront and overcome all obstacles, and to found at once a congregation for the service of the sick; and I feel that the congregation will never have a real life of its own, if it is trammelled by hospitals or anything else." Philip was silent, and appeared to be satisfied; but he bade Camillo place himself thenceforward under the direction of F. Talpa. Camillo wept and entreated S. Philip not to cast him off thus, but the saint only soothed him with words of unutterable charity; his decision was irrevocable. It is possible that he took this decision, as is suggested by his biographers, to mortify the impetuous Camillo for his disobedience; but it is far more probable that he regarded F. Talpa, with his great prudence, better able than himself to restrain within due limits the holy daring of one whom God was leading in ways so difficult and obscure.

However this may be, the ties of esteem and affection which united the hearts of these two saints were never weakened or relaxed. When Philip saw that the Congregation of the Servants of the Sick was manifestly willed and protected by God, his love for Camillo was greatly increased. We find, in the memoirs of the time, a remarkable proof of the esteem in which he held both Camillo and his work. During the last agony of Signor Vigilio Crescenzio, a Roman patrician of rare virtue, Philip said to some of the priests of the new congregation who were also assisting the dying man: "My fathers, go on with good courage in your work of charity towards the dying, for I assure you for your consolation that I have seen the angels of the

Lord putting words into the mouth of one of your fathers who was commending the soul of a dying man to God."

In the pontificate of Sixtus V. the work of S. Camillo had made great progress. It was in its origin a simple congregation of priests without vows, as if S. Camillo would follow the example of the Oratory with which he was so familiar. But as time went on he began to wish to bind his fathers together with vows, not only with a view to their greater perfection, but mainly because the necessity of finding a patrimony greatly restricted the number of his priests. It was a serious question, and there were two opinions on it; so that the Pope committed the decision of it to the Sacred Congregation of Rites, and the Congregation asked counsel of the most esteemed theologians of Rome. The introduction of vows was opposed, amongst others, by the very learned F. Toledo, afterwards Cardinal, and by Cardinal Aldobrandini, an intimate friend of our saint, and afterwards Pope. Philip too, as was to be expected, declared against the imposition of vows on the Servants of the Sick. They were necessarily thrown much among seculars, he said, and hence many dangers beset them. It would be prudent to leave a door open, by which those might retire whose fervour had declined, or who had in any way abused their sacred ministry. We know that, for very grave reasons, the Sacred Congregation and the Pope conceded vows to the religious of S. Camillo; but it is well to note that S. Philip clung resolutely to his idea that the sixteenth century needed rather fresh congregations of secular priests than new religious orders.

Another disciple and friend of S. Philip was the Blessed Giovanni Leonardi of Lucca. They had many

points in common; both earnestly longed for and worked for the true reformation of faith and life in the Church, and both were distinguished for their rare humility, gentleness, and charity. When we read of the blessed Leonardi, that in his simple and familiar preaching he accompanied his words with a smile of affection which gladdened the hearts of his hearers, we think at once of S. Philip in the pulpits of S. Girolamo and the Vallicella.[1] They met for the first time in 1584; Philip was entering upon his seventieth year, and Leonardi was forty-one. But they had long known each other well by repute, and Leonardi cherished the greatest veneration for Philip, whose life and work he strove to imitate in the narrower field of Lucca. A pious Dominican of Lucca, F. Bernardini, came with some of his companions to Rome in 1570, and saw the great good done at S. Girolamo and S. John of the Florentines by Philip and his rising congregation, and heard, moreover, the fathers of the Minerva speak of him whom they so loved and revered as a saint. On his return to Lucca he gathered around him some pious and earnest young men, and spoke to them with great affection of Philip Neri and the great work he was doing in Rome; and thus were sown the seeds of a Congregation of the Oratory in Lucca, formed on the pattern of the Roman. Amongst these young men the foremost in genius, in virtue, and in the desire of perfection, was Leonardi. His confessor was a Dominican, and the brother of F. Bernardini; and, being thrown much amongst the fathers of that order, he heard a great deal of the sanctity of Philip Neri, and the wonders of the Oratory. He was then living

[1] *Vita del Beato Leonardi*, by a religious of his Congregation (Rome, 1861). See Part II., chap. 14, and Part III., chap. 7.

in the world, and supported his family by dealing in medicines; but still his heart glowed with the desire of a perfect holiness, and he longed especially for the perfection of S. Philip; and hence, when in 1573 he became a priest, his first and most stirring impulse was to form around himself a congregation of priests like that of Philip Neri, and which might one day be aggregated to it. His efforts were so successful that within a year he had gathered, in the house called our Lady of the Roses, a small congregation of priests which went on steadily increasing and undergoing various modifications; until in 1621, twelve years after the death of its blessed founder, it became a religious order with solemn vows.[1] For a considerable time, however, at least until the year 1600, the Lucchese Congregation was regarded as a true and proper congregation of the Oratory. It is true that several writers speak of it as only an institute fashioned in imitation of S. Philip's Oratory; but, on the other hand, when Gallonio is enumerating in 1600 the several Congregations, he places the Lucchese Congregation immediately after that of Naples. And, indeed, if we look at the origin of this house, the mode of life of its earliest fathers, and their various exercises, we cannot fail to recognize the form and the spirit of the Roman Oratory.

When in 1584 the Blessed Leonardi came for the first time to Rome, he not only had the consolation of seeing S. Philip, but was, together with his companions, hospitably entertained by him at the Vallicella,[2] where he remained seventeen days. Those days cemented

[1] *Marciano*, tom. ii. lib. v. cap. 10, and *Vita del B. Leonardi*.

[2] The writer of the *Vita* says in S. Girolamo; but in 1584 Philip had been already for some time living at the Vallicella.

their friendship; for although Leonardi, who was young and almost unknown, assumed towards Philip the attitude of a disciple and a son, Philip could be father and master without ceasing to be both friend and brother. And indeed he seldom found himself in the society of saints younger than himself without taking occasion to humiliate himself, and make himself a man of no repute. When Leonardi first saw Philip he cast himself at his feet and entreated him to be the director of his conscience, then and whenever he might be in Rome. Philip on his side, with his natural keen insight into character, and perhaps aided with supernatural light, soon recognised in the B. Leonardi a great saint of God. On one occasion Philip, F. Talpa, Leonardi, and another Oratorian, whose name is not given, were engaged in affectionate conversation, when Philip turned suddenly to this last and said: "Look at those two servants of God," pointing to Talpa and Leonardi; "they have both the same spirit of reform." He then turned to the B. Leonardi and added: "But as for you, my son, consider well that it may not be the will of God to do everything in your time." Leonardi received these words with reverent respect, but without grasping their full meaning. It was not until several years *after his time*, when the Congregation of Lucca took its definitive form as a religious order, and was so widely spread, that the words of Philip were fulfilled.

During the visit of the B. Leonardi to Rome, Philip discharged towards him all the offices of a loving friend. He presented him to Pope Gregory, and to many of the most illustrious personages of the city; and everywhere spoke of his virtues and ability with cordial praise. A few years later he received him again at the

Vallicella, and on that occasion presented him to Pope Clement. He defended and protected him in times of trial, and treated him with all the love of the tenderest of fathers. All the Oratorians loved one whom their father loved so well, and at Naples, whither the B. Leonardi went often, he and his companions were always lodged in the house of the *Filippini* and made quite at home. Several of his companions became dear and valued friends of the fathers of Naples, and a manuscript of the congregation tells us that one of them, the celebrated and very learned Franciotti, lived in the house for months and even years, and preached on Sundays in the church of the Girolamini. When the B. Leonardi went to Naples in 1591, by order of the Pope, to settle a dispute about the alms collected in the sanctuary of our Lady del Arco, he decided on applying these alms to the erection of a church and a house, which he offered to the Naples Oratory. When they declined the munificent offer, by direction of S. Philip he gave both house and church to the Dominicans, with a special stipulation that they should welcome and lodge the sons of S. Philip whenever they wished to go there. Such was the goodly heritage of glad and holy friendship bequeathed to their sons by the saints of the times of Philip.

Those who were much with S. Philip towards the end of 1586 and the beginning of the following year would have often met in the little room at the Vallicella a young ecclesiastic, twenty or twenty-two years of age, full of life and spirit, comely in form and feature, noble and courteous in manner, and with an expression of candour and innocence which won all hearts. This prepossessing young man was a penitent of Philip's and the child of his heart; in later years he was known

as the great and saintly Cardinal Frederic Borromeo, of whom Manzoni has left so finished a description in his *Promessi Sposi*. That exquisite picture of a saint, with its warmth and depth of colouring, is not merely a work of consummate art, it is exactly and severely true. Those who have had occasion to read the life of Frederic and the history of his times, feel at once that there is not in Manzoni's glowing words one touch of exaggeration.

"Frederic Borromeo," says the illustrious writer, "who was born in 1564, was one of those men, rare in every generation, who have with undiverted tenacity of purpose employed vast and thoroughly trained powers of mind, the resources and appliances of wealth, and the advantages of a high and privileged station, in the pursuit and the practice of perfection. His life may be compared to a stream which, bursting clear and limpid from the rock, winds its way through soils of many kinds, undelayed and uncontaminated, and falls at length into the ocean, clear and limpid still. . . . The growing repute of his talents, his learning, and his piety, his connexion by relationship or other ties with so many great cardinals, the influence of his family, his very name, which his uncle Charles had so inseparably associated with sanctity and ecclesiastical rule, all that could open his way to high dignity and qualify him to adorn it, concurred to foretell for him a brilliant and an honoured future. But he felt in the depths of his soul, what no christian dreams of denying in words, that the only just and real superiority of one man over others is that of humbler, fuller, and more availing service, and he therefore dreaded dignities and sought to evade them." When he was archbishop of Milan and Cardinal, "his life was one long lavish devotion of

himself to the poor. His inexhaustible charity shone not only in the giving of alms, but in his whole demeanour. He was easy of access to all, and he deemed himself bound to receive the poor and lowly in station with especial kindness and loving courtesy—they meet with them so seldom in the world. . . . He was admired for an exquisitely winning sweetness of manner, and for a peace and repose of soul which nothing could ruffle; and which was the result, not so much of a singular felicity of natural disposition, as of habitual victory over a nature both quick and sensitive. In regard of his own personal interests, or his glory amongst men, he showed neither joy nor sorrow, neither eagerness nor disquiet; a wonderful thing if these emotions never stirred within him, and a thing more wonderful still if they stirred only to be crushed down and suppressed."[1]

It seems as we read, as if Manzoni were sketching the portrait of Philip himself, nor should this surprise us. We breathe the air we find around us, and with keener delight the purer and more bracing it is; and from his boyhood Frederic Borromeo had lived in the atmosphere of charity and peace which surrounded S. Philip. To every Borromeo Philip Neri was known as the dearest and most valued of friends; a friend in regard of whom affection naturally took the form of veneration and imitation. His cousin S. Charles, who was twenty-six years his senior, in his great desire to see Frederic a saint, spoke to him very often of Philip, of his wonderful gentleness and charity, and how rejoiced he had been to converse with him in Rome, and with what reverence and love he regarded him. In the flower of his youth Frederic was sent to study the

[1] *Manzoni, I Promessi Sposi*, ch. 22.

sciences in Bologna, and was entrusted to the especial care of Cardinal Gabriele Paleotto, who cherished an almost passionate devotion to Philip, and was never weary of talking about him and his doings. Thus it came to pass that though he had never seen Philip he knew him and loved him ; and when in his twentieth year the world grew more and more distasteful to him, and he yearned for a life of study and of piety, his thoughts reverted more frequently and more fondly to the holy old man of whom he had heard so much, and he longed to see him, or at least to stand in some relation to him.

S. Charles died in 1584, and it seemed to Frederic that he had lost the stay and the safeguard of his youth. And then, remembering all that his cousin had told him of Philip, his heart turned towards our saint with a loving confidence, and he felt a strong desire to take him henceforward as the guide and exemplar of his life. In order to place himself in direct relations with Philip he had recourse to his own personal attendant, Giulio Petrucci, who had been for a long time in the household of S. Charles, and employed him to write a letter to the saint in his name. We can easily imagine the emotions with which Philip accepted the proffered friendship and confidence of the cousin of S. Charles, already so distinguished for his piety, his talents, and his great and various knowledge. He immediately directed F. Talpa to write to Frederic the following letter: "Our father Philip and all our fathers have received the greatest consolation from the greetings which Signor Giulio Petrucci has sent us in the name of your very reverend lordship, and the account he has given us of the cordial affection which you condescend to express towards him and all his congregation ; and our

consolation is the greater that we learn that you are ever striving onwards in the way of the Lord. Your letter has done not a little to moderate our grief for the loss of the Cardinal your cousin, of holy memory; for as he always cherished our congregation with especial affection, so have we mourned his death with especial sorrow, not so much for our own sake as for the great and general loss of Holy Church. It is in truth a bereavement which makes us greatly fear that God is wroth against us; but we trust that, now he is *in patria*, he will not fail with his wonted and consummate charity to intercede for us, and to pray for the exaltation of Holy Church, which was always the great desire of his heart. And now, to come to what I have been commanded to write to your most reverend lordship, it is as follows—that F. Philip and all the Congregation purpose to continue towards you the same regard and devotion which they have always cherished towards your cousin, of holy memory, and to recognize in you not only his name, but, as we trust, his spirit of zeal for the glory of God, to the consolation of His servants. And thus, in the name of our father and of us all, I pray you to deign to look on us as your affectionate and devoted servants in the Lord, whom we entreat to grant to your most reverend lordship an ever fuller measure of His grace; and I, in the name of us all, humbly kiss your hand. From Rome, this 23rd of March 1585." Thus was fashioned the first link of the chain which so closely united the hearts of S. Philip and Frederic Borromeo.

No sooner had Cardinal Charles Borromeo departed this life, than the Sixty of the Council of the city of Milan entreated the Pope to raise his cousin Frederic to the dignity of Cardinal in his stead; and their

entreaties were urgently pressed on the new Pope Sixtus V. by Cardinal Ferrerio, a great friend of the Borromeo family. Cardinal Ferrerio deemed it essential that Frederic should come to Rome, and the Countess Trivulzio his mother, and his brother Count Renato, wrote again and again to induce him to present himself before the Pope. But Frederic, to whom nothing seemed so desirable as a life of peaceful study, and whose heart was void of all ambition, persisted in his refusal to put himself in the way of dignities; and at length, wearied with the increasing urgency of his friends, a gloomy melancholy seized on his soul, and he fell seriously ill. To give him a chance of recovery it was found necessary to promise him that he should hear no more of Rome, or the court, or anything which would take him from his one absorbing earthly passion, his application to study. Meanwhile not only Cardinal Ferrerio, but Cardinal Altemps, who was much esteemed at the Roman court, entreated the Pope to bestow the sacred purple on the cousin of S. Charles, who was in every way most worthy to wear it. The Pope promised that he would do so, but with some hesitation; and the name of Frederic Borromeo was not mentioned either in the first or in the second promotion of cardinals. Ferrerio, Altemps, and many others, loudly expressed their discontent and regret; and their vexation was increased by Frederic's obstinate refusal to come to Rome. On renewing their entreaties to the Pope, Sixtus V. told them that rumours had reached him which were far from favourable to Frederic's moral character. Ferrerio replied that, if he could but see Frederic, he would need no further proof of the angelic purity of his soul. This calumny naturally dispensed Frederic's friends from their promise, and he was again overwhelmed with the

importunities of the two Cardinals, in addition to those of his mother and brother. He felt, moreover, that it was now a duty to show himself, and clear away the clouds which darkened his fair fame; but he delayed his departure from Bologna for a few months until he had taken his degree as doctor in theology, and then at length set out for Rome. It is worthy of remark that he stopped for a few days at Ferrara in order to visit Tasso, who was then a prisoner there, and to console him with this proof of tender friendship and sympathy.

Such were the dispositions of mind, and the outward circumstances of Frederic, when he at length reached Rome. One of his first cares was to see Philip, and to place in his hands the guidance of his conscience and his life. Their first meeting is worthy of record. We are told that Philip and Frederic embraced each other most tenderly, as though they had long been friends, and that for a considerable time neither of them could say a word. At length Philip began to speak of God, and in his glad emotion Frederic cast himself at his feet, made his confession, and that same morning received Holy Communion from Philip's hands. How long and how eagerly he had wished to see Philip! How often in Milan and in Pavia, and even amidst the beauties of Arona and the Isola Borromeo, he had wandered in thought to that little room in the Vallicella!

This first visit took place in the September of 1586. From that time to the death of S. Philip almost nine years passed away. During those years Frederic lived in Rome in habits of constant and most intimate friendship with him, and thus our saint transfused by degrees into the soul of his loving disciple his own

charity, his gentleness, and his zeal for the welfare of Holy Church.

The first difficulty which Frederic overcame with Philip's aid was this—he loved solitude and study, and had come to Rome with very great reluctance. And now that he was in Rome, and most cordially welcomed by all, above all by the Pope, who at his first audience had appointed him chamberlain of honour, his heart was ill at ease. He could not endure to live in the great city, amidst the splendours of the court, far from his cherished studies. An unutterable weariness sank down upon his soul, and he pined for the retirement and peace of Milan and of Pavia. At length he came to a resolution to leave Rome and bury himself in the enchanting solitude of the Isola Borromeo on the Lago Maggiore, with no other thought than to serve God and store his mind with knowledge. This resolution was violently opposed by his relations, and by the cardinals and others who hoped to see him soon raised to the honours of the purple. It was a great blessing of God that while his soul was thus disquieted he was led to ask counsel of Philip, and to accept his decision whatever it might be. Our saint had long felt the immense good that might be done by a man like Frederic if raised to high dignity and office in the Church, and therefore he gently soothed his anxious spirit, and rather persuaded than commanded him to remain in Rome. Philip's authority and influence did what all else had failed to do, and by degrees Frederic recovered his peace of mind and submission to the manifest will of God. The saint never opposed Frederic's eager desire of learning, but he prudently moderated it; and taught him to feel that God required of him the sacrifice of his own ease, and of

much of the time he longed to give to the acquisition of knowledge. Frederic humbly acquiesced in this decision, although throughout the most active years of his life he was a laborious student. He became, as is well known, a man of singular learning, and left behind him more than a hundred treatises on various subjects. He was, moreover, the founder of the magnificent Ambrosian Library in Milan; and the regulations he drew up for its management are an abiding memorial and evidence of his great ability, and his ardent desire to promote learning. The college of doctors he established in it, and the literary exercises he prescribed to them; his zeal for the encouragement of the study of the languages of the East; the galleries of painting, of sculpture, and of architecture which he added to it, and the efforts he made to collect for it books and manuscripts from all parts of the world, attest the comprehensiveness and the forethought of his genius.

In the December of 1587, Frederic, who was then in his twenty-third year, was named Cardinal by Sixtus V. He took counsel with Philip, accepted the lofty dignity, and was thus constrained by duty to remain in Rome during almost all the remaining years of the saint's life; for it was not until a month before Philip's death that he was appointed archbishop of Milan. The life of the young Cardinal in Rome was very much like that led by S. Charles; with this difference, however, that Frederic gathered around him all those who were eminent for genius and learning. But none of these was so dear to him and so revered as S. Philip. He was a very frequent visitor in the little room at the Vallicella, and sometimes dined with the fathers in their refectory. In later years he wrote of S. Philip: "During

all the time that I enjoyed the intimacy of that venerable man, he seemed to me so perfect in virtue and so rich in the gifts of God, that he might be compared with many of those whose lives have been handed down to us with so much admiration. He had a boundless knowledge of spiritual things. . . . In my judgment none ever contented me so fully as he; so that when I sometimes asked myself what was lacking to his full perfection, I was, to my great wonder, constrained to answer—nothing." He even had in his room a portrait of the saint moulded in wax, that the continual sight of that holy countenance might animate him to the practice of virtue. And Philip loved him so tenderly that he gave him his almost unreserved confidence, and to him alone he disclosed the full mystery of the beating of his heart. The very sight of Frederic gladdened him, and it was commonly said in Rome that the young cardinal was Philip's soul. And thus it came to pass that in the processes of the saint's canonization no witness is more frequently appealed to than Frederic. Hence, too, his munificent bounty towards the Oratory. When he saw that the new church was not advancing as rapidly as S. Philip wished, he gave four thousand crowns towards it; and these were employed in erecting the high altar, the choir, and the organ-loft. And when Philip had given up his office as Superior of the Congregation, in order to live poor and forgotten in his little room, he chose Cardinal Frederic as the instrument of divine Providence for his support, and begged him to send him every day nothing more than a small loaf of bread and a flask of wine.

And the young cardinal was worthy of this tender affection and confidence. He regulated all his daily actions by Philip's advice, and entreated the saint to

point out to him every fault or defect he might observe in him; and he also kept a little book in which he wrote down the questions he wished to ask of his master and guide, and the answers he received to them.

One point of capital importance in those days was the holy rule and governance of the many priests and others who formed what was called a cardinal's family or court. They might either cloud by their ill lives the fair fame of the prelate they served, or be a bright and edifying example to all around. Sometimes, as is noted in the lives of the Blessed D'Arezzo and S. Charles, the cardinal's family became a kind of religious community. Hence Frederic resolved to follow in this important matter the advice of S. Philip; and the rather that his own love of humility, and his anxiety to avoid all appearance of display, disposed him to depart from what was then the received usage, and restrict the number of his attendants. But in his little book we find that Philip gave him this answer: "You should have in your family just the number of attendants your rank requires, so that you may have quite enough for all you wish to do for the glory of God and the service of Holy Church, without employing other persons. And inasmuch as there are two kinds of nobility, the one of blood and the other of grace, you must always give preference to the latter; but when you find the requisite qualifications in one who is also noble by race, value him exceedingly, for in general a noble serves with more fidelity and diligence. Try to have in your family persons who combine the love of letters with virtue, for knowledge, together with a spiritual life, make up the true and real learning. For all ecclesiastical ministrations you must employ ecclesiastics; in

other matters employ seculars, but let them be men fearing God, and of edifying life; though they are not ecclesiastics in habit, they should be so in virtue and manners."

In the various conclaves in which he was called to take part, it is well known that Cardinal Frederic Borromeo not only shunned all appearance of ambition, but was most rigid in avoiding all party combinations, and voting always for him who was in his judgment best fitted to rule the Church of God. He appears to have deliberated much with himself whether it was his duty to persist to the end in voting for the candidate of his choice; or whether, after once declaring his judgment and doing what he could, he might acquiesce calmly in the choice of the majority. Thus, in his little book we find this question submitted to S. Philip: "I do not know whether it is better for the service of God, and the accomplishment of His holy will, that I should be persevering and urgent in carrying out, in face of all difficulties, what I have begun; or whether, after having used all due means, I should remit the matter into the hands of God." Philip's reply is as follows: "You should follow up the work begun with great fervour and every effort. You should lay aside all deference to man and all personal considerations, and act resolutely, but in submission to God's will, and with much prayer that He would allow nothing to be decided upon but what is for His greater glory. Let that greater glory of God be your one and only thought, and have perfect confidence that He who has inspired you to begin, will enable you to finish what you have begun. And with this intention implore the special help, after Christ, of the most blessed Virgin Mother and of the saints."

On another occasion Cardinal Frederic wished to resign one of the two abbeys he held, which brought him an annual income of seven thousand crowns, and he consulted Philip as to whether he should yield to this wish. The answer of the saint was: "Do not resign either of them, but strive in future to administer the one you feel disposed to resign with greater care and zeal for the glory of God; for he in whose favour you would resign it would not make as good use of it as you do, and it is in better hands as it is. This is my judgment *coram Domino*, before God." Frederic accepted this decision, and proceeded to take an exact account of his yearly income from all sources. Finding that it amounted to fourteen thousand seven hundred and seventy crowns, he set aside one-half of this sum for the maintenance of his family, and the other half he gave yearly in alms. In this little book we find further, that Frederic asked S. Philip whether it would be well for him to devote to a spiritual retreat and the care of his soul the two months of vacation during which the cardinals left Rome; and that Philip's answer was this: "Devote one month to the care of your soul and your advancement in the spiritual life, and the other month to recreation of body and soul together; take with you some spiritual persons, with whom you can converse not only on your own affairs, but on those of Holy Church, and of the whole world."

In 1592 the Countess Trivulzio, the mother of Cardinal Frederic, prevailed on him to spend a few months with her at Milan, and in the Borromeo Palace. Frederic went to Milan in the month of May, and amidst the honours lavished on him, and the joyous feasts with which his presence was welcomed, he found means to

do much good, and to advance in the way of perfection. We read in the little book to which we have so often referred: "All praise and glory be to Thee, O eternal God, that Thou hast brought me back to Rome with somewhat more longing to serve Thee, and to go more firmly on in Thy ways than I have hitherto done. Help me, O Thou most High, King of nations; grant me Thy help!" Philip did not lose sight of his beloved friend and disciple during this absence from Rome, and he wrote to him several times, though he was now old, and but little given to writing. One of these letters, addressed to Frederic at Arona, has been preserved for us, and in it the saint says: "From the letter of your most illustrious lordship, as well as from what I learn from Messer Gentile by word of mouth, this absence of yours has given me great consolation, by reason, not only of your good health and outward happiness, but also of the living remembrance and affection you retain for me. And this affection gives me all the greater delight, because I discover it also in the most illustrious Signora your mother, whom I should greatly rejoice to see in Rome, and so refresh myself with beholding the marvellous prudence and other christian virtues wherewith our Lord God has so richly endowed her. And I beg your most illustrious lordship to offer her my reverence, and to assure her that, in return for the affection she expresses towards me, I shall hold myself ever ready to serve her in anything I can. I long greatly to see your most illustrious lordship again; and I trust in God that I shall have this consolation, however long your return be delayed. Meanwhile, may our Lord preserve you in health—this is the constant prayer of all those of our house—and may He increase upon you His graces and

blessings! And, in conclusion, accept my reverence and love." Early in the following year Frederic returned to Rome, and his intimacy with our saint became still closer and more affectionate.

It is not to be wondered at that Cardinal Frederic, whom Philip had thus formed by his example, by his affection, by his holy conversation and counsel, should have shone as a bright light in the court of Rome, and have been deemed a worthy successor of S. Charles. In the January of 1595, the year of Philip's death, died Gaspar Visconti, archbishop of Milan; and Clement VIII., who was then Pope, fixed his choice on Cardinal Frederic as his successor. This appointment was also eagerly demanded by the Sixty of the Council of Milan, and by the various princes of Italy; and on the 12th April Pope Clement sent for Frederic and told him that he had destined him to the government of that great diocese. In the school of S. Philip the cardinal had made great advances in humility; he shrank with keen distress of heart from the proffered dignity, and absolutely refused to accept it. The Pope only smiled, and said no more for the moment; and Frederic went home, shut himself up in solitude for four days, and entreated the Lord with earnest prayers and many tears, that he would deign to avert from him a burden so appalling. On the 28th of the month, he resolved to go to Philip and open his heart to him, as was his wont, with all freedom and confidence; and then to offer the Holy Sacrifice in his little chapel. Philip received him with his usual cordial affection, listened to the outpouring of his anguish of mind and great disquiet, but said very little; he bade him go and say mass, and to pause awhile before his communion and say to the Lord: "Thou seest, O my Lord, that I would not take

upon me this burden; Thou seest it. If Thou lay it upon me I will call unto Thee in the day of judgment, and Thou must answer for me. For all that Thou shalt lay to my charge I shall hold myself excused; Thou, and not I, must answer for all." Frederic obeyed, though his command sufficiently disclosed the mind of the saint; he prayed as Philip had bidden him pray, and, as he himself writes, he felt great consolation and strength, though not enough to induce him to accept the archbishopric. Meanwhile the Pope communicated his intention to the cardinals and prelates who were most in Frederic's intimacy, and directed them to use their influence with him to induce him to comply with it; and Cardinals Montalto, Farnese, Paleotto, and many others left nothing untried to shake his resolution. But Frederic deemed himself altogether incapable and unworthy of a charge so high, and shuddered at the thought of filling a place once held by S. Charles. But there was one man in Rome whom Frederic could not resist. It was not only the influence of his virtues, his affection, and his example; he knew well from long experience that the aged saint had gifts and an insight above and beyond nature.[1] And thus it was given to Philip to overcome the will which no arguments or persuasions of man could bend; and at Philip's word he stooped his back to the burden, and gave himself and his future hopefully into the hands of God. On the 24th of April 1595, the Pope again sent for him, and Cardinal Frederic Borromeo became archbishop of Milan, just a month before the death of his venerated father and master. Thus one of Philip's last works on

[1] *Bernabei*, Vita S. Philippi, lib. ii. cap. ix. See also the Life of S. Philip, printed anonymously in Venice in 1727, lib. iii. chap. ix. This life was written by Sonzonio.

earth was to use his influence in giving to the Church this marvellously great example of what a christian bishop may be. From some enigmatical words of F. Francesco Zazzara [1] we may even conjecture that Philip had contributed to this nomination more directly still, by counsel given to the Pope. The saint well knew how great and glorious the episcopate of his young friend would be, and, greatly as he prized humility, he could not allow a light which would gladden the whole house of God to be *put under a bushel*. And undoubtedly is was the action of Philip upon his beloved disciple during these nine years of his early manhood that fitted him to be so humble and poor in heart amidst such honours and dignities and wealth.

And now we must go back again to our narrative. We shall meet Cardinal Frederic again more than once. It was his great blessedness to assist Philip at his death, and then to be one of the warmest and most persevering promoters of that peaceful triumph which gave to the gentle Apostle of Rome the honours of a saint of God.

[1] F. Zazzara was, as is known, an Oratorian and a companion of S. Philip. In his manuscript, which is preserved in the Vatican Library, he says: "*Some persons of great influence and sanctity* have impressed on the Pope that the Archbishop of Milan must be a Milanese, . . .". and although they do not mention the name of Cardinal Borromeo, they wish to point him out as the proper person. *The Fathers of the Vallicella* do all they can privately to ensure the nomination of Borromeo."

CHAPTER XII.

A LETTER OF S. PHILIP'S—S. CATHERINE OF RICCI—S. FRANCIS OF SALES AND OTHER SERVANTS OF GOD—BODIES OF THE MARTYRS GIVEN TO PHILIP—HIS KNOWLEDGE OF THE SECRETS OF THE HEART.

THERE is something amazing and almost incredible in the energy and work of the humble old man who was living in the Vallicella, so empty of self and so filled with God. We have lingered long upon his labours during the pontificate of Sixtus V., and yet the half has not been told. While he was governing the Congregation of Rome and founding that of Naples, while he was in such manifold relations with so many saints, he never for a day intermitted that continuous and most minute apostolate he exercised in Rome by preaching, hearing confessions, and visiting the sick. His action was as imperceptible and as beneficial as that of the cool breeze which at times tempers the glowing heat of summer, reviving and refreshing plant and flower. Nor was his action confined to Rome. It was felt in Naples, by means of his rising Congregation; in Lombardy, through S. Charles and Cardinal Frederic Borromeo; the blessed Giovanni Leonardi extended it throughout Tuscany by means of the Lucca Oratory, and the congregations founded in Pescia and Pistoja in imitation of that of the Vallicella; and in San Severino in the Marches his name was known and his influence felt, in the congrega-

tion founded there by F. Talpa. And during this pontificate, moreover, were sown the seeds of the Oratories of Palermo, Fermo, Camerino, and others, which were so soon to spring vigorously up. S. Philip was as a father, who seems intent only on enriching his sons, while the beneficial effect of his exertions is felt by all within the range of his influence.

We have not forgotten that in Florence, the city of his birth, Philip had two nieces, who were especially dear to him because they were nuns, one in the convent of S. Lucia, and the other in that of S. Peter Martyr. Among his letters there remain five written to these nieces; they have a peculiar value as revelations of his inmost soul, and we have referred to them more than once. Of these one was written to the niece in the convent of S. Peter Martyr in 1585, the first year of the pontificate of Sixtus V., and it is remarkable for the beauty of the instruction it contains. The name of this niece was Maria Vittoria, and he had received a letter from her on the 7th October; hence the saint begins his reply by speaking of the great and glorious victory gained over the Turks on that day, fourteen years before. His thoughts then revert to the most holy Madonna, whom he calls *that ineffable Virgin*, and extols for her divine maternity; and he continues: "This holy mother of God is called the Star of the sea; wherefore I conclude that not without deep meaning was this name given you, because in coming forth from the world you were by the hand of God drawn out of the waters of that sea, in crossing over which so many hapless souls perish, the greater part sunk deep in the waters, and so few comparatively escape. But you, like another Peter, have been taken by the hand and upheld, so that you have not so much walked through

the waters as upon them. Those holy fathers of the Old Testament walked through the midst of the waters and were not drowned. You know how the Red Sea was parted, and the river Jordan, so that by the grace of God the people passed through the waters unharmed. But the christian Church walks upon the waves of the sea, and does not even wet her feet, if she abide steadfast in the faith, following in the footsteps of her lawful Spouse and Guide. The walking of those patriarchs of old time through the midst of the waters means that, possessing riches and having wives and children, they lived without soiling their affections with any of these things; for they took of them only the use, and were ready to leave them at the bidding of God."

After illustrating this idea with many examples from the Jewish history, the saint proceeds to speak more particularly of the perfection of religious: "Holy Peter and the other apostles, and apostolic men after them, and all that primitive Church in Jerusalem, when they saw the Son of God born in poverty, and living in poverty, with nothing of His own, so that He had not even where to lay His head, and beheld Him dead and naked on a cross, they, too, stripped themselves of everything, desiring only what might cover them decently, and sustain them poorly in extreme necessity; and they chose the way of the counsels, as do in this day all true religious, who keep ever living within them the image and exemplar of that most wondrous foundation of Christian perfection; relinquishing not only the possession of property and all else that they might with a good conscience keep, but also their own opinion and notions and will, in order that they may have a perfect victory over themselves, and that the

kingdom of Christ may come to bear rule in their souls with His grace and His love, and that the devil may be banished thence, and never more have sway therein by means of sin. Now, my daughter, you have with your little bark almost reached the shore of the land of promise, that blessed country promised to the elect of God. . . . And, O my most beloved daughter in Christ, since you are so near a felicity so great, turn not back, nor strike your oar into the earth ; draw not off from the shore, look not back in thought or affection to the world ; for the world is a thicket in which all who wander are waylaid and slain, or a forest full of savage monsters, or a plain full of soldiers, full of robbery, of violence, and of injustice, always excepting the good, of whom there are some, though few. . . . The Holy Spirit speaks to you thus in the psalm : Listen, O daughter, and from the words receive light and effulgence of grace, and in that light look around you. When you see the fair and peaceful land that is pointed out to you, forget that other land full of toil and weariness, which brings forth only thorns and briars ; have no memory more of your country and your father's house, but incline the ear of obedience to my words, and stoop your shoulders to the cross of true mortification, exterior and interior both, of all evil ways and thoughts and all delusive loves. Put in me thy trust, thy hope, and all thy affection ; so will I take thee for my bride, and have delight in thy modesty and humility. I will give thee from my table every manner of food I am wont to give to those who serve and love me faithfully, such as the temptations I permit, and tribulations which at first will seem to thee bitter, but after, when thou growest used to them, will be sweet to thy taste.

And thou wilt learn and know that this way, the way I take with those I love, is the true espousal of thy soul to me."

The conclusion of the letter glows with warmer emotion still. Speaking of the joys of Paradise he says: "And since we cannot satiate ourselves with that satiety," he is speaking of the love of God, "for that the longing and the hunger ever grow in the measure of the abundance and the plenteousness given to us, both heart and mouth and voice and bones, and all that is within us, are constrained to cry out: Blessed art Thou and holy, for ever and for ever: Amen." And then it is beautiful to see how amidst this rapture, he remembers that sacred love of our brethren which was the great idea of his life, and requires that even nuns, cloistered from the world as they are, should enlarge their hearts with charity towards all men. Thus he says to his niece: "and in your prayers you must remember those who, neither in bark nor by bridge, are crossing this dangerous sea, but are struggling to ford it; and you must commend them to the mighty and compassionate Hand which has succoured you, and have for them the greatest sympathy, and put them in your inmost heart. . . . The pelican is said to feed on the flesh of those oysters which it finds on the shore closely shut up within a very hard shell; it swallows them, and in the warmth of its stomach the shell relaxes its rigidity and opens. . . . Even so, see that you put these hardened and obstinate sinners in your heart, and cry to God in charity, and get permission to take some disciplines for them. God will send them compunction, and their hearts will open to the light of grace; and you will take such liking to this exercise, and will glow with such zeal for the conversion of souls,

that you will altogether dissolve in tears of sweetness as you think of the joy there is in heaven and amongst the holy angels at the conversion of a sinner. You will, moreover, grow in charity and in merit, and those souls converted by your prayers will be your glory and your crown; not that you have been the principal cause of their conversion, but that God will give you the fruit of it while He reserves to Himself the honour, seeing that He alone has been the author of their conversion."

While we are in Tuscany, we may linger awhile in Prato, and especially in a convent of sacred virgins there. If Philip ever visited Prato, he must have done so in his boyhood; but we have seen that one of his disciples, Francesco Vai, was a member of one of the noble families of that city. We have spoken of a letter the saint wrote to him, and it is pleasant to know that even now the name of Philip Neri is especially loved and venerated in that family.[1] Now in Prato, in the sixteenth century, there bloomed a gracious flower of sanctity, of whom the Church rightly sings: *as is the lily amongst thorns, so is this thy beloved amongst maidens.* This elect soul, so beloved of God, was Sta. Caterina dei Ricci, whom a modern Tuscan writer has spoken of with truth as *the worthy friend of the great Neri*, a saint the beauty of whose soul fascinates irresistibly those who gaze upon it. This holy virgin never saw Philip Neri with her bodily eyes, though, as we shall

[1] Guasti wrote in 1878 a beautiful notice of the Cavaliere Giuseppe Vai, a descendant of the Vai to whom S. Philip wrote; and he concludes it by saying that Giuseppe was always most exact and devout in the practice of his religion, without the faintest tinge of ostentation, but with that simplicity of soul which one of his ancestors had learned from the lips of Philip dei Neri. And this saint, in writing to his spiritual son, Messer Francesco Vai, that "death is wont to affright those who are in their sins, but certainly not those who, like S. Paul, desire to die," seems to be suggesting a consolation to the family of Giuseppe, &c.

see, she saw him in spirit, and in manner altogether ineffable and above nature; but she knew his inmost heart, and loved him as only saints can love, and humbly strove to transfuse into herself the grace and finished beauty of his soul.

Philip's friendship with Caterina began in this wise. In 1502, a few years after the death of Savonarola, the Dominicans of S. Marco in Florence built in Prato a convent of sisters of their order, which was called S. Vincenzo, and became distinguished, not only for the holiness of its daughters, but for the exceeding skill with which they cultivated painting, illuminating, sculpture, and even poetry. S. Philip speaks of this convent in a letter to a person whose name is not given; he introduces to him his own sister Elizabeth, who had by marriage entered the family of the Cioni, and who had some suit at law with the sisters of S. Vincenzo; and he begs him to look into the matter and set it right. In 1535, Sandrina dei Ricci chose for herself, in the thirteenth year of her age, *the better part* in this convent; she took in religion the name of Caterina, and thus gave to Florence a Saint Catherine, as Siena and Genoa had theirs. At the clothing of the young novice there was present, amongst others, Fra Angelo Diacceto, Prior of the Minerva in Rome, who was, as we have seen, so intimate a friend of S. Philip's, and who was present when the saint uttered that memorable cry of *victory, victory*, which so gladdened the hearts of the Dominicans in the great cause of Savonarola. Fra Diacceto was an uncle, moreover, of Caterina; her father having taken for his second wife a Diacceto, the sister of the Dominican Prior.

Fra Angelo tenderly loved his niece, and held her in veneration for her great virtue; and as he saw her

frequently at Prato, he was naturally the first to speak to her of S. Philip. In addition to this, the sisters of S. Vincenzo were noted among the communities of the order for the zeal and love with which they kept alive the veneration and *cultus* of Savonarola. Their devotion to the great Frate even surpassed that of the friars of S. Marco, and had in it somewhat of the tenacity with which women cling to what they love with passion. In S. Vincenzo were preserved the portraits of the Frate, his manuscript writings, and every relic of him that could be obtained; and the sisters invoked him as a saint, and asked for miracles through his intercession. In this *cultus* the young Sister dei Ricci was one of the most ardent; she treasured every relic of the Frate, studied his writings, and cheered and encouraged the scattered and dismayed disciples of *the Prophet*, as Fra Girolamo was styled on the many pictures of him which issued from the convent at Prato. It is recorded in her life that Caterina, on one occasion, recommended herself fervently to Savonarola in a grave illness, and that she was cured. At that time a loving reverence for Savonarola implied only a zeal for innocence and even severity of life amongst Catholics, and had not as yet been perverted to factious and malicious ends. It was, as we have seen, shared by S. Philip with Caterina and her sisters, and it was a strong additional bond of their esteem and affection for each other. Caterina talked much about Philip to the Dominicans of Prato, and Philip talked of her to the Dominicans of Rome, and there was between them a frequent interchange of letters. It is much to be deplored that this correspondence has perished; of Philip's letters not a trace remains; while of Caterina's we have only one,

the singular gracefulness and beauty of which make the loss of the others more sensible; this letter will be more particularly referred to presently.

Meanwhile, Caterina's life became more manifestly supernatural and marvellous; and the points of resemblance between her spirit and that of Philip were so many, that their mutual veneration and affection were greatly increased by this correspondence. The holy cheerfulness of Caterina, who *will have no sadness amidst the thorns of life*,[1] but only, as she loved to say, *a manly patience*, naturally endeared her to the saint who seems to us the most perfect type of Christian cheerfulness among the saints of God. And, then, if we look at Caterina's soul on its mystic and spiritual side, it appears to us a soul trained altogether in the school of S. Philip. In her we find, though in another form, the counterpart of the miracle which inflamed and dilated Philip's heart with the Holy Ghost in the Catacombs. We read in her life that in an ecstasy of surpassing sweetness, it pleased God to change and transform her heart, making it like the heart of the most holy Mary. And then she felt herself, as it were, dissolving in an infinite and unutterable gladness, and in every respect other than she was before. She seemed to breathe another air, as of a climate altogether divine; so that from that time she could not recognize herself to be the same. She was so raised above all earthly things, and her converse amidst spiritual things so ready, so close, so full of light, that she seemed to live no longer in this world, but in the world behind the veil.[2]

[1] See the exquisite preface of Guasti to the Letters of S. Caterina dei Ricci. Prato, 1861.

[2] Serafino Razzi, *Vita*, lib. ii. cap. 6; and Sandrini, *Vita*, lib. i. cap. 17.

There was thus between these two souls a resemblance and a harmony which drew them towards each other in God; and, moreover, Philip could not but feel drawn towards the holy virgin who, though shut up from the world in S. Vincenzo, burned with so eager a desire for the holy reformation of the Church. It is worthy of notice that in 1542, just when Philip was entering upon his lay-apostolate in Rome, Caterina uttered in an ecstasy these words: "I commend to Thee, O Thou Spouse of my soul, all Thy whole Church. Oh, how many Judases there are still in Thy Church! Alas! alas! alas! Here must we hold our peace. Renew, O Lord, renew this Thy Church, which, Thou seest, has no longer semblance of a Church. . . That poor city of Rome, what sins are committed there! what lives men live there! and, likewise, I entreat Thee, help all Italy, all Christendom. Oh, what blindness, what ignorance!"

From what has been said we may conclude that both Philip and Caterina dei Ricci cherished in their hearts a great desire to see each other, and pour out their souls in that sweet and heavenly converse which is chief among the solaces of the saints here on earth. The biographers of the saint tell us how he longed for this; but not even for this would he break his resolve never to leave Rome, the allotted sphere of his life and work. He resigned himself to contentment with her letters, and with what he heard from time to time of the wonders of her life from his Dominican friends.

But it was the will of God to show to Philip the blessed saint who so closely resembled him; and He, the Almighty God, who has *all power in heaven and in earth*, rendered her present to him, not merely as a form of the imagination, but a real living being, with

the ineffable brightness of her countenance, so that they passed some time together in heavenly converse. Nor does it beseem us, such as we are, to ask how this could be. The *how*, the mode of the works of God is the secret of His Almightiness; that impenetrable secret so full of joy to our hearts, because it lays us humble and silent before the majesty of our Father in heaven, and deepens within us the feelings of reverence, awe, and trustful love which become His children here on earth. The fact is related by Gallonio, who adduces the testimony on oath of five witnesses examined in the process of canonization, and with greater detail by Bacci, who enables us to fix its date within certain limits. Bacci refers in his account to the testimony of Giovanni Animuccia, who died in 1571; and so we know that this miracle took place at least twenty years before S. Catherine's death in 1590. Now, the account given by Bacci is as follows:—"Giovanni Animuccia went on one occasion to Prato in Tuscany, and while visiting Sister Caterina dei Ricci of the order of S. Dominic, now commonly called the Blessed Caterina of Prato, he asked her if she knew F. Philip Neri. The servant of God replied that she knew him by repute, but not by sight, although she had a great desire to see him and converse with him. In the year following, Giovanni went again to Prato, and when he visited Sister Caterina she told him that she had seen and conversed with F. Philip, although Philip had never left Rome, nor had Caterina left Prato. On his return to Rome, Giovanni related to the saint what had passed between him and Sister Caterina, and Philip confirmed the truth of all that the servant of God had said. Nay, on the death of Catherine in 1590, while he was speaking of her in presence of many persons, the saint himself said openly

that he had seen her during her lifetime, and described her features one by one, although, as has been said, Philip had never been in Prato, nor Catherine in Rome. Moreover, when an engraving of the servant of God was shown him, he said at once: "This picture is not at all like Sister Caterina; her features were quite different." The Bull of S. Philip's canonization, by Pope Urban VIII., confirms this miracle, and adds that the two saints conversed for a long time together. In the report of the Sacred Rota it is said that it was the Blessed Caterina who appeared to Philip; and hence we see the miracle thus represented in some engravings, and in the noble painting with which Antonio Marini of Prato has adorned the communal chapel of his native city.

Of this sacred friendship there remains to us, as has been said, one only record, a letter from S. Catherine to S. Philip. The same holy woman, who in her letters admonished the Cardinal della Rovere, rebuked the Bishop of Pistoja, and spoke to the prelates of her order with a frank and fearless zeal, comes before Philip as an unworthy sinner; and at the same time soothes and comforts him as a daughter might soothe a father. She writes thus, "I shrink into myself with confusion when I think that you, who are occupied without ceasing in so many great things for the glory of God, should set yourself to write to me who am only a weak woman of no value, and a miserable sinner. May God reward you for the great charity you do me! I asked the Lord that I might be able to serve Him this Lent in health of body; and He granted me this grace in such wise that I found myself suddenly and completely cured, though it seems to me that I have done nothing to merit this. I have, nevertheless, made over to you a

part of everything He does for me, and I have besought His Divine Majesty to restore and preserve to you your health, because Holy Church has so great need of you. I beg you to pray to Jesus for me, that the many graces He bestows on me every moment be not thrown away through my fault. In regard of your death be of good cheer; for to a servant so faithful as you have been all through the course of your life, God, who is ever most just, cannot refuse the reward of Paradise. Prostrate on the ground I implore your holy blessing.—Your unworthy daughter, SUOR CATERINA,

SAN VINCENZO. A sinner at the feet of Jesus."[1]

Among the saints who knew and loved Philip it is a peculiar joy to me to make mention of Francis of Sales, one of the gentlest and most winning of the saints who are the glory and crown of the Church. In the profusion and variety of great souls who have adorned the city of God on earth there are some who bear a strong family resemblance, and set forth, with but slight shades of difference, one and the same aspect of Christian heroism. Now, if I do not deceive myself, Philip and Francis of Sales resemble each other so closely that we might at times almost mistake one for the other. If Francis had not been fifty-two years younger than Philip, and if he had lived with Philip in Rome, I can imagine that never would two saints have been bound together with so mighty a bond of love. We find in both the same glowing love of God, the same gentleness and meekness, the same sunny smile, the same winning sweetness of speech, and the same intense zeal for the

[1] This letter is the 58th in the collection of the Letters of S. Catherine by Guasti.

salvation of souls; even the charms of natural disposition, and the serene beauty which comes of unsullied purity of heart, were alike in both; and in both we find that unlimited kindness and considerateness which is not weakness, but the perfection of self-sacrifice. The personal knowledge these saints had of each other was but slight; Francis knew and loved Philip rather in his sons and in the results of his work, than in his person. Before Francis began his grand work Philip had already gone to his rest, and, in common with all the servants of God of that day, Francis venerated him as a saint from the moment of his death. In regard of him, then, we find rather an affectionate veneration of Philip than that interchange of thoughts and words and affection which sustain christian friendship.

There is one incident in the early life of Francis which reminds us forcibly of Philip. In 1591, he came, for the first time, to Rome; he was then twenty-four years old, and Philip was seventy-six. Francis was still living in the world; and, though his life was virtuous and holy, he had not yet decided to consecrate himself to God in the priesthood. He visited the sights of Rome with the ardent curiosity of youth, but with the thoughtfulness and purpose we should expect to find in one so richly endowed in mind and heart. He looked not only at the glorious monuments of Rome, but at its great men. And F. Giacinto Gallizio, one of the biographers of S. Francis, tells us that he visited in Rome a great many persons distinguished for genius and for piety; and adds, that there was a constant tradition that he at that time became acquainted with S. Philip Neri, whose reputation as a saint was then most widely spread. He says, moreover, that the venerable saint embraced Francis tenderly and kissed him on the

forehead, saying that he was destined to become a great servant of God, and a most useful ruler of the Church. There exist also paintings of very ancient date which represent this incident, and we may therefore regard it as a fact.

But S. Francis of Sales greatly loved Philip in the person of his sons, and was the intimate friend of some of the fathers who had been the saint's companions, and who, therefore, more brightly reflected the perfections of his character. He came a second time to Rome in 1598, when he was already a priest, and had begun the marvels of charity and zeal he wrought in the Chablais; and he was in Rome consecrated as coadjutor to the venerable Bishop of Geneva; Philip was no longer there, but his sons, those noble sons and brothers of the saint, were carrying on the work of the Apostle of Rome, and in his spirit. During the five or six months he passed in Rome, Francis was a frequent visitor at the Oratory, and always to his great consolation and edification. He contracted a close friendship with several of the fathers, and, in particular, with Baronio and F. Giovenale Ancina. Baronio was so taken with him that he loved him almost as another Philip, and said of him that: "in that incomparable man it was almost impossible to detect the vestiges of the original sin which is common to all the sons of Adam;" and Francis loved Baronio in return, and wrote to him letters of great tenderness and beauty. But his chosen friend among the fathers was the venerable Giovenale Ancina. He was never weary of speaking of his many virtues; and, when Ancina, who had become Bishop of Saluzzo, was cut off by poison in the vigour of his days, Francis, then Bishop of Geneva, wrote as follows to S. Jane Chantal: "Monsignor the bishop of Saluzzo,

one of my dearest friends, and one of the greatest servants of God and His Church the world has ever seen, passed a short time ago to a better life, to the incredible sorrow of his flock." How cordial was the friendship which united these holy souls appears from a letter written by the Prior of Belleville to Ancina, in which he says: "The greatness of the love the bishop Francis bears towards your most reverend lordship is shown in this, that he speaks of you with tender and even passionate affection, and cannot restrain his gladness of heart at the prospect of seeing you, and embracing you in charity and peace."[1]

With so many points of resemblance and sympathy between the spirit of S. Francis of Sales and that of S. Philip, it was natural that the holy bishop of Geneva should love the sons of such a father, and the congregation he had formed. Few men of the sixteenth century regarded it with so much esteem and admiration. When he came to Rome as coadjutor to the bishop of Geneva, he was very anxious to found a congregation of the Oratory at Thonon, the chief city of the Chablais, in which he was making so many converts. A superficial observer would not perhaps have deemed the Oratory the institute best suited to that province, torn and distorted as it was by Zuinglians and Calvinists, and hating the very name of Catholics. It was not, indeed, the special mission of the Oratorians to refute and convert heretics; but S. Francis felt that a body of priests, living together in a congregation, moulded by the spirit and guided by the rule of S. Philip, would be singularly useful in confirming in the faith the multitude of converts, and in drawing into the fold of the Church those who were led astray

[1] *Marciano*, tom. i. lib. iv. cap. 8

by ignorance and prejudice. How could the charity, the meekness, and the guilelessness of S. Philip, and the holy, laborious, yet unobtrusive life of his sons, fail to have their effect on even the most embittered enemies of the Church? What weapons more availing than these, in fighting the battles of the Lord? And then, what was there to prevent the Oratorians from engaging in the conflict with the protestant innovators? So thought S. Francis; and he therefore besought Pope Clement VIII. to approve the erection of a congregation of the Oratory in Thonon. The Pope readily and gladly assented to this request, and issued in September 1597 the Bull *Redemptoris et Salvatoris nostri*, by which the house and church of our Lady of Compassion in Thonon were constituted a house and church of the Oratory, according to the constitutions and usages of the congregation of Rome; and moreover, "our blessed son in Christ," Francis of Sales, was to be the first head and superior of the new congregation. And thus, within four years of the death of S. Philip, his Oratory was transplanted into the furthermost confines of Italy, to confront and subdue the new heresy; and at its head we find one of the most widely renowned and admirable saints who have adorned and gladdened the Church of God.

Among the illustrious friends of our saint we find many, less known to the world than those we have mentioned, who yet lived in repute of great sanctity in their generation. Such was the venerable Cosimo Dossena, bishop of Tortona, of the Congregation of the Barnabites, who was singularly esteemed by S. Philip. And such, too, was F. Agostino Adorno, the companion of S. Francis Caracciolo in the foundation of the Clerks Minor, who greatly loved our saint; and

who, when he came to Rome, was always lodged with his companions at S. Girolamo della Carità. Another, and a more intimate friend and penitent of S. Philip, was the holy bishop of Grosseto, Giulio Sansedonio, of Siena. When he first came to Rome he put himself wholly into the hands of Philip, who got him appointed for a time rector of S. John of the Florentines, and aggregated him to the band of priests at S. Girolamo. Under Philip's direction he made such progress in goodness and purity of life that, as he passed along the streets, he was pointed out as *the holy padre*. He was made bishop after Philip's death, but in great humility resigned his see, and came back to live in Rome a life of rare perfection. At his death he left his property to the Roman Oratory, and was buried, according to his earnest desire, in the Vallicella. There were, besides these, many holy nuns in various monasteries, who were formed in great measure in S. Philip's school. Of these we can mention only the venerable Sister Francesca del Serrone of S. Severino, who came to Rome for the Jubilee of 1575, and put herself under Philip's direction. The saint tested her, according to his wont, with many mortifications, gave her most salutary counsels, and then said of her: "Jesus is formed in that woman's heart; she has the spirit of a S. Catherine of Siena."

Among the friends and disciples of Philip was one, however, of a type so original that we cannot refrain from lingering a while to study him. In some respects he reminds us much of Fra Felice da Cantalice, while in others he seems much what Philip was while living in the world. His name was Matteo Guerra of Siena, and he was everywhere known as Teo di Siena. His parents, like those of S. Felice, were peasants, living

not far from Siena; and from his earliest youth it was his delight to pray and to practise mortifications for the love of God. While still young, he entered into the service of a community of nuns in Siena, and there learned the art of tanning leather, an art in which the Sienese at that time excelled. At the age of twenty-two he had a shop of his own, gave large alms to the poor, spent much time in prayer, frequented the Oratory of S. Bernardino, and lived a life of great austerity and penance. After some time he felt an eager longing to give himself entirely to God, and went to Monte Collesi with a few companions to become a Capuchin; the Superior, however, accepted the others and rejected Teo. Still Teo did not lose heart; he went peacefully back to Siena, and gave himself up to the service of the sick in one of the hospitals, and at the age of twenty-nine was admitted as an attendant in the hospital of S. Maria della Scala. There he wrought such marvels of charity that he was appointed infirmarian, though he was altogether without education. The sphere of his charity was now greatly enlarged, and he lived only for his beloved sick brethren. After employing the whole day in attending to their wants, he gathered the servants of the hospital into his little room in the evening, and there he prayed with them, and took the discipline, and strove to influence their hearts with the love of God. On his recovery from a dangerous illness he established in the hospital the work of the Christian doctrine, founded a seminary in the abbey of S. Donato, and, layman as he was and wholly uneducated, he began to preach in the public ways, and even on the grand *piazza* of Siena. The fruit of his zeal was prodigiously great; he reclaimed a great number of dissolute young

men, converted several Jews, brought back to the bosom of the Church many who had imbibed the errors of Ochino, and in every way reminds us of what Philip was during his life in the world.

But Teo was not content with this, and proceeded to found in the church of S. Giorgio a congregation of priests, which was formally approved by Gregory XIII., the same Pope who approved the Oratory of S. Philip; and in this congregation, founded by an unlettered dresser of leather, were many priests of singular piety, ability, and culture. As time went on, the new congregation suffered many persecutions, and when these were at their worst, Teo came to Rome to seek direction from Pope Sixtus V. On his arrival in Rome, his first visit was to S. Philip, towards whom he was strangely drawn by the general similarity of their character and aims, no less than by his repute for sanctity. Philip saw at a glance that Teo was no ordinary saint, and that the congregation of Siena was a reflexion of his own. He exhorted him to confidence and hope, accepted him as his spiritual son, and from that moment cherished him in his heart. Throughout the whole affair for which Teo had come to Rome, he guided him with wise and loving counsel; and Teo was so delighted with Philip that he said: "I have had to do with many persons in my time, and with many religious of various orders; and I have never found any one who gave me such holy, prudent, and mature counsel, as Philip Neri." And the results of Philip's counsel were most happy. The intention and aim of the servant of God were clearly set before the Pope; it was known that Philip cordially approved them; and thus both the Grand Duke of Tuscany and the archbishop of Siena formally sanctioned the rule of Teo's congregation, and took it

under their protection. It was even resolved that Teo should be appointed Superior; but he protested, in his humility, that it would be a scandal to see a layman at the head of a congregation of priests. Teo subsequently came often to Rome, when the fame of his sanctity was so widely spread that princes, and cardinals, and even Popes sought his advice and his prayers; and Philip revered him as a saint, and always welcomed him lovingly as his guest at the Vallicella.

It would appear that Teo, saint as he was, did not at first fully comprehend the large, free spirit of S. Philip. While staying at the Vallicella in 1591, he noticed that one evening, when several prelates and others had come to see him, the saint talked quite naturally and cheerfully with them, just as if he were one of themselves, without any obtrusion of religion. When Teo saw this, it occurred to him, that perhaps after all, Philip was not the great saint he was thought to be; and this thought haunted and teazed his mind, however much he tried to put it away. The next morning, when he went to confession to Philip, he said nothing about this suspicion of his, regarding it as something altogether outside of his own will. When he had finished his confession, Philip looked earnestly at him, and said: "Teo, take great heed to be always very sincere in your confessions, and never conceal, out of human respect, anything, however slight it may appear to you. Why don't you confess that last evening you were somewhat scandalized at me?" and then he went on to tell Teo exactly what had passed through his mind. Teo was struck with amazement and confusion, and never again misunderstood the ways of our saint; and Philip's affection for him grew daily greater, and

was, as we shall see, marvellously proved at his death.[1]

Let us now again take up the thread of our narrative. Although the mind of Sixtus V. was continually occupied with manifold and vast undertakings, he never forgot Philip. He very often extolled his sanctity and zeal; he enriched the congregation with many privileges, and even conferred on it some sources of income. We read, in the memoirs of the time, that one day Cardinal Cesi asked the Pope whether it would please him that a congregation of the Oratory should be founded by Philip in the church of S. Maria dei Lumi at S. Severino. The Pope answered by asking: "But do you suppose that he and his sons would accept it? It would be a great joy to me, were the congregation to strike root in the Marches." And when the Cardinal replied that he knew for certain that Philip wished it, the Pope exclaimed: "Then blessed is that town! what good they will do in it!"

One of the greatest and most signal favours bestowed by Pope Sixtus on S. Philip was the gift of the bodies of certain martyrs for the church of the Vallicella. It was a favour which brightened and gladdened Philip's old age; he valued it exceedingly as a treasure beyond all price, and it was regarded throughout Rome as a proof of the veneration in which the Pope held our saint. Whether it was that Philip felt an unusually great devotion towards relics of the saints in general, or that these particular relics took him back in memory to the years he had passed so peacefully in the Catacombs, and stirred in him again his early longing after martyrdom; or whether he felt that these sacred

[1] See, in addition to the lives of S. Philip, the *Vita di Teo da Siena* by P. Luzi, now an exceedingly rare book.

bodies would effectually shield his beloved Congregation from all perils, certain it is that his gladness knew no bounds, and he resolved that the translation of these holy relics should be made with the greatest pomp and splendour of Catholic devotion.

The gift came about in this way. Among the many cardinals who loved and venerated Philip one of the most distinguished was Cardinal Agostino Cusano, who was at that time titular of the church of S. Adriano in Campo Vaccino. While taking down the high altar of this church in order to erect a more stately and magnificent one, the Cardinal came upon three marble chests or coffins containing the bodies of certain martyrs, together with tablets on which their names were very distinctly inscribed. They were the holy martyrs Flavius and Domitilla, Nereus and Achilleus, Marius, Martha, Papias and Maurus, whose bodies had been translated to S. Adriano by Gregory IX. during the earlier part of the thirteenth century, from the church of S. Martino dei Monti, where they had been originally placed by Pope Sergius II. In one of these coffins were the bodies of S. Papias and S. Maurus, with this inscription: *in hoc loco requiescunt corpora SS. Martyrum Papiæ et Mauri.* When Philip heard of the discovery of the holy bodies he went at once to S. Adriano, and there remained a long time gazing on the sacred relics, and kissing with tears of devotion the coffins which enclosed them. Then he proceeded to touch them reverently, and arrange them in their due places; and while doing this his countenance shone with a radiant and ineffable gladness. Cardinal Cusano was so impressed with Philip's devotion that he offered to give him, with the Pope's permission, the sarcophagus which contained the two bodies of SS. Papias and Maurus, and to translate

them in procession, at his own expense, to the Vallicella. Philip was transported with joy at this offer of the cardinal, and the Pope gladly gave his consent.

The 11th February 1590 was a bright and memorable day to our saint. First of all, the sarcophagus was opened, and a small portion of the sacred relics was taken out to be left in S. Adriano; and then it was again closed, secured, and sealed, and borne on a magnificent bier to the high altar for the veneration of the faithful. After this, at a sign given by Germanico Fedeli, the master of ceremonies, a long and devout procession wound its way by the arch of Septimus Severus to the summit of the Capitol, and thence all the way to the Altieri Palace, close to which now stands the church of the Gesù, when it turned off to the left, towards the Vallicella. It must have been a solemn and majestic sight. The sacred bodies, over which was a *baldacchino* of richest workmanship, were borne along amidst clouds of incense by the priests of the congregation, who relieved one another from time to time. Then followed a multitude of nobles and religious and clergy, with those who frequented the Oratory, all bearing lighted tapers in their hands. The streets were crowded with spectators, but, so strong were the feelings of reverence and devotion amongst them, that there was not the slightest accident or disorder. When the procession reached the great door of the Vallicella it was met by ten cardinals, whose names it is a joy to remember. They were Alfonso, bishop of Porto, Cardinal Gesualdo; Gabriello, bishop of Albano, Cardinal Paleotto; Ippolito Aldobrandino, cardinal of S. Pancrazio, grand penitentiary, and afterwards Pope under the title of Clement VIII.; Girolamo della Rovere, cardinal of S. Pietro in Vincoli; Scipio

Gonzaga, cardinal of S. Maria del Popolo; Mariano Pierbenedetto, cardinal of SS. Peter and Marcellinus; Frederic Borromeo, cardinal of S. Agatha, afterwards archbishop of Milan; Agostino Cusano, cardinal deacon of Sant' Adriano; and Guido Pepoli, cardinal deacon of SS. Cosimo and Damiano. When they had entered the church Cardinal Cusano solemnly consigned the sacred relics to S. Philip, and Philip received the precious gift with a devotion and a gladness so great that his countenance beamed with light; his heart bounded with impetuous joy, and his whole body was tremulous with unwonted emotion. It seemed as if he could not tear himself away from the holy bodies; but at length the sarcophagus was placed on an altar erected for it in the middle of the church, and richly ornamented. There it remained for four days, and it was then placed provisionally in the sacristy, until a suitable place could be prepared for it in the church. Philip then bade F. Gallonio write with the utmost minuteness of detail the lives of the two martyrs.[1] And finally, when the church of the Vallicella was consecrated on the 23d May 1599, four years after Philip's death, these sacred relics were placed under the high altar, their heads encased in silver, and there they remain to this day.[2]

The five years of S. Philip's life which fall within the pontificate of Sixtus V. were not only years of noble and singularly fruitful activity, but were crowded with miracles wrought by God through him. Some of these have been mentioned in the ninth chapter of this

[1] These lives are printed at the end of F. Gallonio's work, the *Istoria di alcune vergini Romane.*

[2] *Gallonio*, lib. ii. cap. 81. *Bacci*, lib. ii. cap. 3. Some details have been taken from Piazza's *Gerarchia Cardinalizia*, in which several manuscripts are cited as authorities.

book; we will now select two or three more from the many recorded by Gallonio, who takes them from the process of the saint's canonization.

The sick and suffering were always the especial objects of Philip's loving sympathy. Thus we find that Vittoria Varesi was afflicted with a painful disease in her right hand, which was pronounced incurable. She went to Philip, almost despairing, but not without faith, for she had before had experience of the efficacy of his prayers. When Philip heard what she had to say, he took her by the hand that was crippled by disease, looked up to heaven and prayed with his wonted trembling, and then said to her: "You will be cured." She went home, removed the bandages from her hand, and in a few days was quite well. The next miracle recorded by Gallonio is more striking still. Laura Moroni, a child twelve years of age and of noble birth, lay at the point of death; her eyes were closed, she could not speak, and seemed to have already lost all consciousness. The physicians had sorrowfully given her over, she had received Extreme Unction, and preparations were making for her burial. In this extremity her sorrowing parents thought of F. Philip, whose prayers had restored so many sick persons to health. They sent for him, and the saint came immediately, and his heart was moved with compassion for the parents in their anguish, and for the dying girl. He went to the bedside, breathed in the child's face, and smote her gently on the cheek; he then took her by the hair and shook her head to and fro, called her by her name, and bade her say the sacred name of Jesus. At Philip's bidding her consciousness returned, she opened her eyes, said distinctly *Jesus*, and was in a few days free from every trace of sickness.

There was in the Congregation a lay brother whose name was Giovan Battista Guerra, a native of Modena. One night, while he was arranging some hangings on the walls of the church, he fell from a great height and struck his head with such violence on the pavement that he was taken up insensible. He uttered no sound, heard nothing, and lay still and motionless as if he were already dead. Many were praying around his bed when Philip arrived; he bade them continue in prayer, and knelt for some time himself and prayed at the foot of the bed. Ere long the physician of the house, Angelo Vittorio Bagnorea, arrived, and, after examining the wounds of Giovan Battista's head, pronounced them mortal, and said there was no hope of his recovery. Other physicians came and confirmed the opinion of Bagnorea. They suggested various methods of treatment more or less severe, but as they did not agree as to the method to be adopted, they ended by applying only some simple oil to the wounds. Bagnorea then went to Philip's room and said to him: "Padre, those injuries are most certainly mortal;" and Philip replied: "I do not want Giovan Battista to die this time, before he has finished the building of the church. I am praying to the Lord, and will pray for his restoration to health; and I tell you he will get over these injuries." And so it was. The fever expected and dreaded by the physicians never came; shortly after, Giovan Battista recovered consciousness and began to move, and the next morning he was so much better that he wanted to get up as though he were in perfect health. And these are but specimens of the almost innumerable miraculous cures recorded by Gallonio and Bacci in their inestimable lives of our saint.

Besides these many miracles Gallonio gives an

account of prophecies uttered by S. Philip, and also of certain facts which reveal the existence in him of a high supernatural gift, of which we must speak more particularly. Philip, then, had received from the Lord the power of knowing the most hidden thoughts and feelings of those around him, and he used this power with mighty effect in drawing souls towards God. After careful examination of the facts attested on oath during the process of canonization, Bacci concludes that, before his penitents had spoken a word, Philip generally knew their sins and their virtues, and all their most secret thoughts. When they thus saw that the veil was drawn which hides the heart of man from all around, and often from itself, when they heard Philip speak so openly and decidedly of things which they had scarcely dared breathe to themselves, a great awe fell upon them, and they felt a strong desire to cleanse their hearts from every sin and stain. Philip's penitents knew well that he possessed this supernatural power. Those whose consciences reproved them of sin could not bear to feel his eye fixed on them, while those whose hearts were pure and clean were at ease and glad in his presence. It was a common thing for one to say to another: "We must be wary and think well what we do or say, for F. Philip will be sure to know all about it." Bacci relates more than forty attested facts which show us that our saint habitually read the hearts of others as plainly as he read his own. Some of these facts have been already mentioned, and others will come before us presently; but before proceeding with our narrative it may be well to say a few words which may lessen the difficulty felt by some in these days in believing that a gift so high can be bestowed on man. This absolute transparency of the

human conscience, this endowment by means of which a man knows, without the ministry of words, what another man thinks and feels in his hidden heart, may perhaps appear far less easy to believe than miraculous powers of healing. In these latter the supernatural power is put forth upon the body, and deals with natural and material laws, whereas the gift of which we are now speaking seems to reverse and overthrow the laws and conditions of the soul itself. But in both cases alike there is that intervention of supernatural power which we call a miracle; and miracles are necessarily involved, not only in revealed religion, but in the simple fact of creation, that fact admitted by all true philosophy as the pivot on which all human knowledge turns. The first and all-inclusive miracle is the miracle of creation. If we admit that, we are equally bound to admit that He who made can, for His own high ends, modify and change what He has made.

And why should it seem to us a thing incredible that a man should be enabled by God to read the thoughts of his fellow-men? Whether it be that the soul has naturally a kind of transparency which lays it bare and open to the purged eye of a saint; or whether the Lord clothes that particular thought or feeling with a form which manifests it to the saint as the form of speech manifests it to other men; or whether God whose resources are infinitely many, makes use of other and by us inconceivable means; why should it be a thing in itself incredible, that a saint should read the heart of man? We ourselves can draw at will the veil which shrouds from view the workings of our minds, and by simple speech render them visible to our fellows; and cannot God, who created both me and my power of thought, render them, by other means, visible

to a saint? To a savage it is quite as incredible that a man should map out the heavens and tell the distance of the stars, as this reading of the hearts of others seems to us. And in regard of those who seek, in the immense power of the human imagination, an explanation of all alleged miraculous facts and an excuse for rejecting them, it is enough to reply that, while we admit that phantasms of the imagination may at times deceive us, yet when the facts are many and established by incontrovertible evidence, when they are such as to transcend all known forces of nature, the recourse to imagination alone for their interpretation is a puerile misuse of reason.

Among the many facts recorded by Gallonio, on testimony which cannot be rejected, are such as these. One day a priest from another land, who had just come to Rome, entered the church of the Oratory; Philip had never seen him before, nor heard of him; he nevertheless beckoned to him, and lovingly admonished him to be more guarded and reserved in his communications with women. The priest felt that he merited and needed the admonition, and was so deeply impressed by Philip's supernatural discernment, that he corrected his fault, and lived to attest the fact on oath during the process of canonization. In the month of September 1588, Giulio Savera of Modena was going one morning to Philip for confession. On his way a letter was put into his hands, which informed him of the death of his mother, of whose illness no tidings had reached him. His heart was filled with sorrow, and he went on his way thinking only of the beloved mother he had lost. When he knelt down in presence of Philip, and before he could open his lips, the saint took off his berretta, and put it affectionately

on Giulio's head, wound his own rosary about his neck, and said to him: "Courage, my son; don't weep for your mother any longer, for she is gone into eternal salvation; wherefore you should rather rejoice and be glad." In that same year, the noble lady, Elena Ceoli, being in great danger during her confinement, was greatly aided by the prayers of the saint; and as Philip was going, she entreated him either to stay in the house, or to send one of the fathers to baptize her child as soon as it was born. Philip, however, went away saying: "There will be no need of that." And the next morning, Elena gave birth to a dead child In 1590, Ettore Modio began to go to the saint for confession, and said nothing of some temptations he had felt, and had been negligent in resisting and driving away. Philip said to him: "You have had such and such temptations, and you have not put them away promptly. Why do you not accuse yourself of them?" Modio was smitten with confusion and awe, and from that time forward was careful to resist temptation, and most exact in confession. A noble lady, one of Philip's penitents, was planning a good work in her mind, but had never spoken of it to any one. One day, when she came to confession, Philip began to speak to her of this good work, as if he knew everything about it. The lady was so overcome with emotion, that she burst into tears, and went away marvelling at Philip's supernatural knowledge of her heart and its devices.

During all these years, we seem to be living in an atmosphere of miracles, prophecies, supernatural appearances, and marvellous things wrought in behalf of those who even at a distance from Philip invoked his aid. And it is, as Gallonio truly says, very striking to observe that

Philip's chief joy was to use his supernatural powers for the consolation of those in affliction or sorrow. Sometimes the effect of his words, or of some slight action, was so astounding, that we instinctively infer the miraculous action of God. Thus, he frees a lady from grievous temptations by merely placing his hand on her head; he released a priest from the scruples which tormented him in saying the divine office by praying for him; on another occasion, he said to one in sore distress: "Well, I will pray for you, and you will soon feel that I have done so;" and almost immediately that person felt unspeakable consolation and fervour of spirit. In a word, the power of miracles seemed to be in Philip an abiding habit, and gave all his words and actions an almost startling efficacy for good. The whole course of his life is a wonderfully harmonious combination of many forces, converging on one point. Amongst those forces, miracles have their place; but we notice that Philip works them almost unconsciously, and with the very same simplicity and unbounded charity with which he speaks or writes. No saint teaches us more clearly and impressively that God *alone doth wondrous things*, and that man is, at most, the instrument he condescends to use. Miracles abound most in the lives of those saints in whom the man has vanished quite, and the traces of his action are most entirely effaced.

CHAPTER XIII.

S. PHILIP AND THE CARDINALS—THE ARISTOCRACY OF ROME.

Those who have followed the life of S. Philip to this point will have noticed how steadily, and yet how imperceptibly, the sphere of his influence has widened. As he grew in years, both the energy and the efficacy of his apostolate increased; and yet his life was not one of those which can be gathered up into a small number of brilliant and striking works. No life was ever more crowded with works, each perhaps little in itself and apart, but which, when put together and summed up, produce a whole of singular grandeur and beauty. So is it with some physical forces; each by itself may be feeble and inefficient; combine them, and you have not their sum but their product.

We have had occasion, from time to time, to mention some cardinals who either aided Philip with money for his great work, or revered him as a saint, or regarded him as a dear friend; and we have grown familiar with the names of Cardinals Charles and Frederic Borromeo, and of Cesi and Cusano. In two separate parts of his life of S. Philip, Gallonio enumerates ten cardinals who most loved him and held him for a saint; the first of those lists was drawn up in 1585, and the second four years later. In 1585 we find the names of eleven cardinals: S. Charles

Borromeo, Guido Ferrerio, Guglielmo Sirleto, Michele Bonelli, Antonio Carafa, Gabriele Paleotto, Giulio Santorio, Alessandro dei Medici (afterwards Pope Leo XI.), Nicola Sfrondati (afterwards Pope Gregory XIV.), Agostino Valerio, and Vincenzio Lauro. Four years later we find nine other names: Cardinals Ippolito Aldobrandini, Girolamo della Rovere, Scipione Gonzaga, Giovan Francesco Morosino, Frederic Borromeo, Agostino Cusano, Guido Pepoli, Paolo Sfrondati, and Ottavio Paravicino; and Gallonio ends by saying that these were they who most loved and revered S. Philip, and that he might mention others. Bacci and Sonzonio add the names of some others, of whom the most illustrious was Cardinal Silvio Antoniano, a great friend of our saint, and who is omitted by Gallonio probably because he was not created cardinal until 1598, three years after Philip's death.[1] The others of whom Gallonio speaks are a goodly number. Besides the two Colonnas, the two Farnesi, Savelli, Salviati, and some others, there are at least eight more cardinals who either were in intimate relations with S. Philip, or have written in his praise; and these are Cardinals Ottavio Bandini, Girolamo Panfilio, Ludovico Madrucci, Alfonso Gesualdo, Otto Truchses, Pietro Paolo Crescenzio, Alfonso Visconti, and Ludovico di Torres.

It is certainly a consideration of great weight, even in regard of such a man as Philip Neri, that he was held for a saint and revered by so many personages of the highest rank in the hierarchy of the Church; and of the greater weight when we reflect that those

[1] Gallonio has omitted the name of Cardinal Cesi, probably because he died in 1586, shortly after his first list was drawn up. Several of the cardinals mentioned above did not receive the purple until after Philip's death.

cardinals were themselves men illustrious for their sanctity and wisdom. Such men as S. Charles and Frederic Borromeo, Sirleto, Valerio, Paleotto, and Antoniano, are enough to give dignity and splendour not to the College of Cardinals alone, but to the whole Church of their day. Sirleto, for instance, was not only a man of rare perfection in virtue, but one of the most learned and accomplished men of the sixteenth century, and master of many languages. In the calculations and discussions made in order to the reform of the Calendar his profound scientific knowledge attracted universal admiration. Yet his nephew, in an oration delivered to the Roman Senate in 1609 in honour of our saint, speaks thus: "Philip Neri was united to Cardinal Sirleto with the closest bonds of friendship and brotherhood. He was with the cardinal at his death, and for three days and nights never left his side; and the cardinal was in great gladness and peace, having with him a friend so entirely beloved."

Were it only that the eminent personages whose names we have mentioned held Philip for a saint and spoke in his praise, it would be enough to record the fact and pass on. The light that shines from his life is so pure and bright that the esteem and praise of others can add but little to its lustre. But when we see so large a number of cardinals clustering with affection and devotion around a lowly priest, who so entirely despised and set at naught all earthly honours and wealth, we feel that that reformation of the Church to which Philip had consecrated his life is no longer a far-off hope, but an accomplished fact. It is one of the most consoling indications of the great change which had come over the outward life of the Church since

the beginning of the century. Moreover, the relations of many of these cardinals with Philip were most intimate and special. Some of the holiest and most learned amongst them gloried in being the disciples of such a father and master; and they show us that it is possible, with the grace of God, to be placed on the loftiest height of human dignity, and yet delight to breathe the sweet and peaceful atmosphere of humility and charity in which S. Philip lived. Many of them devoted themselves to the particular study of his virtues, and have left us the inestimable treasure of their testimony to his sanctity.

The College of Cardinals may, in general, be taken as a true representation of the Church of Rome, and indeed of the whole Catholic Church. The Church is a vast body into which the divine life of Jesus Christ flows through the Roman Pontiff, who is its heart, into all its furthest members. The primary channels of this wondrous influx and diffusion are, each in its own way and of its own right, the body of cardinals and the episcopate. But just as our natural blood is first propelled by the heart throughout the various arteries into the whole body, and then flows back upon the heart again, so is it in the higher life of the Church. When the life of the Church is strong and pure, its heart is more vigorous and its blood richer, and the signs of this fuller life are pre-eminently visible in that sacred college which is nearest the heart, and so feels its action more immediately. The bloom and the decay of the Catholic Church may be seen and measured, not only by the bloom or decay of the episcopate, but also, and with greater certainty, by the energy or the languor of the College of Cardinals. And thus, if we would measure the progress of that

reform of the Church which Philip longed for and had worked for, we have only to compare the cardinals of the pontificate of Sixtus V. with those of the opening years of the century. In the times of Julius and of Leo we find several members of the Sacred College living for worldly politics, for ambition, for luxury, and a life altogether of this world; whereas we find ourselves, towards the close of S. Philip's life, surrounded with cardinals whose piety and wisdom and charity and learning have never perhaps in any age been surpassed. This great change in the character and aspect of the Sacred College has been noticed by all historians, Protestant as well as Catholic, as the surest indication of the marvellous renewal of the life of the Church. We now see how it came to pass that a man like Philip, so lowly and retiring in his ways, should be thrown so much into the society of cardinals, should take such delight in their conversation, and value their friendship so highly. And hence, too, we see what led Philip to strive to appear ignorant and at times almost ridiculous, and to mortify himself in ways so strange, as when he made his appearance at the dinner-table of Cardinal Alessandrino, the nephew of Pius V., with a porringer of lentils in his hand. All these startling mortifications are but revelations of the struggle going on in his heart between his yearning for humiliations, and the necessity in which he found himself placed of mingling with prelates and cardinals and even Popes, in order to further that revival of spiritual life which was all along, whether consciously or unconsciously, the pole-star of his life.

Of the cardinals who were more directly and evidently Philip's disciples we will select four, in addition to Frederic Borromeo, for more particular mention;

and they are Alessandro dei Medici, Ottavio Paravicino, Agostino Cusano, and Silvio Antoniano.[1]

Alessandro dei Medici was born in Florence in 1535. From his boyhood he was remarked for the rare brilliancy of his talents, his noble disposition, and his calm, serene judgment. He loved study, especially the study of sacred truths, and expressed a wish to devote himself to the service of the Church. This wish was, however, opposed by his mother, a Salviati, and a niece of both Leo X. and Clement VII.; and Cosimo dei Medici enrolled him among the *Cavalieri* of S. Stefano. On the death of his mother he was ordained priest, and he withdrew from the world into a country retirement in order to live for God alone, and the duties of his sacred ministry. But his cousin, Cosimo dei Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany, would not allow a man of such rare ability and virtue to escape him altogether, and therefore appointed him his ambassador at the court of Pius V. He was soon chosen bishop of Pistoja, and subsequently archbishop of Florence; but he found himself constrained to keep his post of ambassador for fifteen years, and thus passed a great part of his life in Rome. On being created cardinal he withdrew to Florence, and devoted himself to the care of his diocese; but he had frequent occasion to visit Rome. We are not told when or how he became acquainted with Philip; it must have been soon after his arrival, for in 1570, when he was in his thirty-fifth year, and had not been long in Rome, we find him among the saint's most devoted and loving friends. In that year, as may be remembered, various charges were brought against the Oratory of S. Girolamo, and

[1] Ranke, History of the Popes, book iv. ch. 10, *The Roman Curia*. His notice of S. Philip is singularly striking.

S. Pius V. spoke of them to Alessandro dei Medici as a known friend of Philip's. It thus appears that in 1570 Alessandro, the Florentine ambassador at the Papal court, went frequently and familiarly to see Philip, and attended the sermons at S. Girolamo with great delight. And as all the records of the time assure us that he was a constant penitent of our saint, we may conjecture that on his coming to Rome he placed himself at once in his hands. The fame of Philip's sanctity had long since reached Florence; and it was most natural that Alessandro should choose his saintly fellow-citizen as guide in the ways of God.[1]

We know how unbounded was the influence which Philip exerted upon his penitents, and on all who came within its range. To be a penitent of Philip's was to become his disciple and his friend; and hence we find that very soon after his arrival in Rome Alessandro was one of the saint's most beloved friends and most docile disciples. The praise of Philip was always on his lips, and he gladly took every occasion of expressing his veneration and affection. When the first stone of the Chiesa Nuova was laid Alessandro performed the sacred ceremony;[2] and when the church was so far advanced that it could be used for public worship, Alessandro sang the first High Mass in it. The force of the attraction of this dearest of fathers was great, and few felt them so strongly as Alessandro. Though he

[1] Ciacconius, *Historia Pontificum Romanorum et S. R. E. Cardinalium* (Roma, 1677). Tom. iv. p. 72.—*Alexander Medices.*

[2] The memory of this fact is preserved by the following inscription in the church of the Vallicella:—

GREGORIO XIII PONTIF. MAX.
ANNO JUBILÆI M.D.LXXV MENSE OCTOB.
ALEXANDER MEDICES FLORENTIÆ ARCHIEPISCOPUS
LAPIDEM PRIMUM SOLEMNI RITU BENEDICTUM
IN FUNDAMENTUM HUJUS ECCLESIÆ POSUIT.

was both bishop and cardinal, and moreover ambassador of a mighty prince, he could not tear himself away from Philip's room. He would spend four or five hours at a time in loving conversation with the saint; and on his return home he would say that the hours passed with Philip seemed like minutes, that there was in the conversation of that best beloved of priests a sublimity, a sweetness, and a simplicity so wonderful that it took him quite out of himself; and hence he said, as other cardinals said, "*Che volete?* say what you will, Philip's room is to me a Paradise." It is worthy of remark, too, that although the name of Savonarola was hateful to the Medici, and Alessandro himself had written to the Grand Duke to put him on his guard against the spreading *cultus* of the dreaded Frate, yet Philip's known devotion to the memory of the great Dominican, whose portrait Alessandro must have often seen in the little room at S. Girolamo, brought no cloud over their affectionate friendship.

During these long hours their converse was of God and His Church; we know how Philip would discourse on themes like these, and we must not forget that he who so eagerly drank in his words was a prince of the Church, and the ambassador of Florence. Very often Alessandro consulted Philip on intricate questions connected with his high office, and was wont to call him *il prudente*, the prudent man. And thus, under Philip's guidance, this great man was noted for his princely spirit and his great virtue, and moreover for the consummate wisdom and prudence with which, as legate in France and on other occasions, he conducted the most delicate and important affairs of Holy Church.

After Philip's death Alessandro's sorrow was great and abiding, and he sought every occasion of honouring

his memory. When he heard that the fathers of the Oratory had in their humility laid the body of their blessed father in the common burying-place of the Congregation, he joined with Cardinal Frederic Borromeo in urging that it should be laid in a place apart. Four years later, when the body of the saint was found incorrupt, Alessandro made an offering of new vestments for his clothing, and placed on his head a wreath of gold set with gems, and drawing from his finger his own pontifical ring, in which was set a costly sapphire, put it on the finger of the saint.

We are not surprised that Alessandro, nurtured thus at Philip's side, became one of the holiest and most illustrious cardinals of his time. Ciacconio, speaking of him on his election as Pope, says that the comeliness and majesty of his person, the bright purity of his unsullied life, his ardour for the faith, the grandeur and munificence of his spirit, the gravity and discretion of his words, and his meek and gentle bearing, combined to beautify and adorn the whole life of the new Pope, whose heart, he says, glowed with love of Philip. And to these commendations we may be permitted to add, a rare prudence and most subtle skill in treating the most complicated affairs both of Church and State.[1]

One day, when Alessandro was as yet only ambassador of Florence, Philip said to him with his wonted simplicity and sweetness of manner: "Well, Alessandro, I tell you you will be Cardinal and Pope, but *you will not last long.*" Girolamo Ghetto, general of the Augustinians, was present and heard these words, as he deposed on oath in the process of canonization. We can readily believe that Alessandro regarded these words as

[1] Ciacconius, *Vita Papæ Leonis XI.* He says, speaking of Leo, *Qui Philippum Nerium unice amabat.*

a prophecy; he knew how richly Philip was endowed with supernatural gifts, and he had not forgotten what he had seen and heard in the time of S. Pius V. And we know that when, on his election as Pope, the Auditor of the Rota[1] approached to kiss his feet, he said to him: "We shall not give you much trouble, for *we shall not last long.*" The echo of Philip's words was lingering still in his ears. Alessandro was elected Pope in 1605; and when he died, after a pontificate of only twenty-five days, it was surely natural that Philip's words should be regarded as a prophecy.

During his brief reign he gave a signal proof of his undying love of S. Philip. Among the few projects he could form in a pontificate of days so few, one of the foremost was the canonization of his beloved father and friend. When Baronio was speaking to him about the canonization of Charles Borromeo, the Pope said: "Yes, I have been thinking of that; but, above all, I will not forget Philip Neri." Another incident of this short reign shows us what progress Leo XI. had made in the school of S. Philip, and left to his successors a striking example. His election had been welcomed with enthusiasm in Rome; and although he was in his seventieth year, the vigour of his constitution seemed to promise him several years of life. But the fatigue of the ceremony of his coronation brought on an illness which proved to be mortal. During his last illness he edified all around him and all Rome by his patience and resignation; he was evidently absorbed in the hope of the life to come. He had a grand-nephew, a young ecclesiastic whom

[1] The Auditor of the Rota, who bore witness to these words spoken by Leo XI. when he was in robust health, became subsequently Pope Gregory XV.

he had himself educated, and whom he tenderly loved. It was not an unusual thing at that time for a Pope on his election to raise to the purple some member of his family, not altogether unworthy of such dignity. Thus we have seen that Pius IV. created his nephew Charles, a cardinal; S. Pius V. promoted his nephew Bonelli, and Sixtus V. followed their example. The dying Pope was urged by many Roman nobles, by the ambassadors of foreign courts, and by several cardinals, to confer this dignity on his nephew; they assured him it would be a promotion most grateful to all Rome and to the whole Church. But Leo XI. refused their request. They then persuaded the Pope's confessor to press their entreaty on him; but when he attempted to do so, Leo dismissed him at once, dreading lest family affection might cloud his judgment, and lead him to do what he deemed an act unbefitting the Vicar of Christ, and even sent for another confessor to assist him in his last moments. Such was the spirit of Leo XI., no unworthy disciple in the school of S. Philip.

Another cardinal formed to virtue in this school was Ottavio Paravicino, who was also in great repute for learning and piety, although Ciacconio says that in his old age he was not altogether free from an undue attachment to money. Paravicino belonged to a noble family of northern Italy, and was born in Rome in 1552. He says of himself: "It was given me by the grace of God to know Philip Neri when I was about six years old, and from that time I enjoyed his conversation and intimacy for twenty-one years." At the age of twenty-eight Paravicino went into Spain, and was thus separated from Philip for a time; but on his return to Rome he frequented the saint with increased

devotion and love. When Philip first saw him, Paravicino was small and deformed in person, but singularly keen and shrewd, and very diligent in his studies. The saint, seeing that the clever boy was entrusted to his care, loved him tenderly, treated him with affectionate kindness, and charged Baronio to direct his studies, and to be his sponsor at his Confirmation. When the exercises of the Oratory were begun at S. John of the Florentines in 1564, Philip sent Paravicino, then twelve years old, to live there with Baronio, Tarugi and Bordini, in order that he might be formed to habits of piety and humility, and at the same time carry on his studies; and while Baronio was cook of the community, Paravicino read in the refectory. His removal from S. Girolamo did not, however, take him from under Philip's loving care; and Ottavio felt himself more and more closely drawn towards one who, in his all-embracing charity, cherished the young with an especial tenderness. He used to boast in after life that he had served Philip's mass for twenty years, and he had thus the singular blessedness of often seeing the saint rapt in ecstasy while offering the holy sacrifice. Very often, too, as he himself tells us, he found that the most hidden secrets of his heart, and the fleeting lights and shadows of his boyish fancy, were all known to Philip. And he adds: "I give thanks to the Almighty God for having granted me such a master as Philip, whose praises will never cease to be uttered to the end of time. . . . I had him always before my eyes; I most carefully watched his actions and his words; and I knew that he was endowed with an eminent, yea a pre-eminent love towards God and towards man, and also with most profound humility." And hence we find that it was

Ottavio's delight to be always with Philip and to be allowed to converse with him.[1]

When Ottavio Paravicino left S. John of the Florentines in his twenty-eighth year, he was a man thoroughly instructed in all sacred science, and of great goodness and even perfection of life. Four years later, in 1584, he was named by Gregory XIII. bishop of Alessandria in Upper Italy; and in 1587 Pope Sixtus appointed him his legate *a latere* in Switzerland. The disciple of S. Philip and of Baronio filled these high offices with dignity and ability, and was regarded by all as a man of singularly pure and upright life, of marvellous energy and activity, of great genius, and zealous in upholding the dignity and liberty of the Church.

Whenever his duty called him to Rome it was Ottavio's delight to live with Philip, as in the days of his youth; and when he was made cardinal by Pope Gregory XIV. in 1591, he rejoiced especially that he would thus be always near the saint. He very often spent long hours in conversation with him at the Vallicella, and even took up his abode there for days and nights together. Though years had wrought such a change in their relative position, he took pleasure in rendering Philip the most humble and loving service. Philip was now an old man, and often laid up with sickness, and Cardinal Paravicino always insisted on being his infirmarian. He would make his bed, sweep his room, and set it in order, and minister to him in every way. He himself writes: "I served the father with such joy that, although I sometimes suffered from hunger and thirst and other things, I nevertheless felt an incredible pleasure in serving him; and now, when-

[1] See the lives of S. Philip, especially that by Sonzonio; and also Ciacconius, *Vitæ Pontificum et Cardinalium*, &c.

ever I recall the services I rendered him, I feel a great gladness of heart, with one only regret, that I did not serve him longer." We read in the lives of our saint that one day, when Philip was ill, he sent out of his room all who were in it except Cardinal Paravicino, and then turning to him, he said: "Ottavio, I want to speak a little with you, but if my cough should make it necessary for me to spit, I pray you hand me the basin, as you used to do before you were a cardinal." To which the cardinal replied at once: "Father, this is just the greatest kindness you could do me, and I feel myself unworthy of such an honour." This incident shows how perfect a master of humility Philip was, and what manner of men were the cardinals formed in his school.

Another disciple of S. Philip's school was Cardinal Cusano, whom I mention with peculiar pleasure, because he and Cardinal Frederic Borromeo were the two members of the Sacred College whom the saint especially loved. He was born of a noble family in Milan, and was a cousin of S. Charles. He was trained from his youth to learning and to piety, and distinguished himself greatly at Bologna in civil as well as canon law, which he studied under Angelo Papio, and subsequently in Pavia. On returning to his native city, he had the singular blessedness of living for many years with S. Charles Borromeo, who sowed in his soul those seeds of great virtue which expanded with so much beauty under S. Philip's care. In Milan the young Cusano showed, amongst other virtues, a tender compassion for the poor. Family affairs called him to Rome during the pontificate of Gregory XIII., and he lived with Baronio and Tarugi and the other fathers at the Vallicella, probably because S. Charles had recommended

him to the care of S. Philip. Knowing that his stay in Rome would be a long one, he placed himself at once under our saint's direction, and, like so many others of Philip's penitents, became one of his beloved and most docile disciples. Gregory XIII. was not long in perceiving the great ability of Cusano, as well as his learning and piety, and entrusted to him many affairs of great importance; while Philip trained him carefully in his school of perfection, and gave him his fullest confidence. These many affairs, and the offices conferred on him by the Pope, kept Cusano in Rome, and in 1588 Sixtus V. created him cardinal; but even in this high dignity his love for Philip and his dependence on him grew day by day until the saint's death. We find him always with Philip, delighting in his conversation, and the love of our saint for him was so well known that it was said of him, as of Cardinal Frederic Borromeo, that he was Philip's soul. We have seen that it was Cardinal Cusano who gladdened the saint's heart by offering him the bodies of the two martyrs, of whom we have spoken at length; and we must now add that, knowing Philip's tender devotion towards the Blessed Mother of God, he also adorned and endowed the rich and beautiful chapel of the Purification in the church of the Vallicella.[1] From among the many expressions of his love for our saint we will take but one: "I have never known any one, whether religious or secular, held in greater veneration than was Philip by men of every condition, as well private persons as princes. And this, by reason of the great opinion which all held of his sanctity, and the marvellous fruit of his labours in the multitude of souls

[1] An inscription in this chapel says: *Augustinus Cusanus, S.R.E. Presbyter Cardinalis fecit.*

who were by him guided in the way of salvation. . . . I have always esteemed his many virtues, which seem to me to shine the brighter the more he strove to conceal them." And he goes on to speak of a gift of our saint which has not been much remarked by his biographers, that he was a great peacemaker, and that by his marvellous gentleness and prudence he reconciled many persons who were divided by what seemed inextinguishable feuds.

During Philip's last illness Cardinal Cusano was, as we shall see, one of those who had the privilege of being constantly with him, and no one sorrowed more bitterly for his death. Only three years later he himself died at Milan, at the age of fifty-six. His death was such as befitted the friend and disciple of S. Philip; and while he bequeathed the bulk of his property to the great hospital at Milan, he left a sum of money to provide for himself a resting-place in his beloved church of the Vallicella.[1]

One of the names most illustrious in the literary as well as the ecclesiastical history of the sixteenth century is that of Silvio Antoniano, who was born in Rome in 1540. His father was a draper in a small town of the Abruzzi, but he attained and deserved the great dignity of the sacred purple. Few men have ever been so splendidly endowed with genius and virtue; his genius was of the highest order and his learning immense, and his virtues were heroic in their perfection. And it is a pleasure to know, not only that S. Philip loved him and was loved by him in return, but that he had the glory of directing and guiding his steps towards the summit of the high mountain of Christian perfection; and thus the name of our saint is bound up with those of the

[1] Ciacconius, *Vitæ Pontificum et Cardinalium*, tom. iv. p. 192.

intellectual leaders of his time, as well as with its greatest saints.

The details that are given us of Antoniano's boyhood would be incredible were they not attested by witnesses so many and so grave.[1] When he was eleven years old he wrote with elegance Italian, Latin, and Greek; he sang to the harp with a voice of singular sweetness and with the skill of a consummate artist; and the verses he sang were improvised by him with a facility as well as a felicity of expression which delighted and amazed the hearers. In addition to these rare gifts of intellect and imagination his heart was pure and his life blameless; he was devout and humble, and singularly compassionate towards the poor and the suffering. He showed a combination of intellectual and spiritual greatness as wonderful as it is rare; for men of great mental power, and at the same time of rich and fervid imagination, are but seldom free from self-conceit and vanity. And temptations to vanity were not lacking to the youthful Silvio; for cardinals and princes would invite him to their banquets, and hang in rapture on his verses and his voice. But God had, in His mercy, provided him with an antidote to the poison of flattery and caresses. From his earliest boyhood Philip was the director of his conscience and his spiritual father, and employed every means to turn towards God the soul He had so singularly enriched.[2] He had no fear that Silvio's powers of mind and teeming imagination would hinder or check his spiritual perfection; but he felt that such a chosen soul might confer immense benefit on the Church and on society, were it filled to

[1] The writers of his own time speak of Silvio as *miraculum ingenii, portentum naturæ.*

[2] *Sylvius Philippo Nerio a teneris annis se in pietate instituendum regendumque tradiderat.* Ciacconius, tom. iv. p. 328.

the full with God, illuminated by His faith, and warmed with His love. Philip loved him much, kept him at his side, and guided every step of his way; so that Silvio grew up a wonder of virtue and of grace as well as a wonder of genius. Among the cardinals his contemporaries he stands out one of the most noble, graceful, and winning. There seems in him a purer and brighter reflexion of Philip's spirit than in most of those who sat at the feet of our saint. The book he wrote at the request of S. Charles on the education of boys, embodies every principle of S. Philip's school of perfection. The perfect simplicity and humility of a man so great, so renowned, and so courted, together with his boundless charity to the poor, reveal to us the true disciple of Philip. We seem to be listening to the accents of S. Philip when we read in Silvio's will that "the purple of a cardinal is not the symbol of outward dignity and princely pre-eminence, but of an ardent charity towards the poor of Christ;" and we are not surprised when we find it recorded that at the time of the terrible inundation of the Tiber in 1598 he distributed all he possessed amongst the poor, and for a whole year lived in extreme poverty, and even in want.

At sixteen years of age, Silvio held the post of Professor of Literature at Ferrara; and became, as years went on, a philosopher, a jurisconsult, a theologian, and, as a writer of Latin, was without a rival. He was, for a short time, separated from S. Philip, because S. Charles would have him in Milan as his secretary; but, on the election of S. Pius V., in 1566, he returned to Rome, and never left Philip's side again. He was then twenty-six years of age, and had recently been ordained priest. Sonzonio tells us that he took up his abode with S. Philip at S. Girolamo, but Ciacconio says only that he

said mass daily in that church, and saw a great deal of our saint. But, however this may be, his devotion to Philip was great, and was manifested with characteristic warmth. While still a simple priest, he erected a tomb for himself in the chapel of the Nativity at the Vallicella, and, when he had become cardinal, he rebuilt and adorned it. Among the religious whom he loved we are told that he especially distinguished the fathers of the Oratory; and, among these fathers, his dearest and most intimate friend was Baronio, towards whom he was naturally drawn by the sympathy which unites souls of kindred gifts and tastes. Baronio consulted him on every great difficulty he met with in writing his Annals, and expressed his amazement at the combination of learning so vast with humility so profound; this was the crown of all his training in S. Philip's school. While Silvio held the highest ecclesiastical offices, Philip often made him preach at the Vallicella, where his warm and brilliant eloquence produced the happiest effects.[1]

Silvio's genius, learning, and virtues, raised him by degrees to the highest offices in the Church, but without detaching him from S. Philip, or endangering his humble simplicity of heart. He was first Professor of Literature in the Sapienza, then Principal of the Vatican *Accademia*, founded by S. Charles, in which he took the name of *Risoluto;* he was for twenty-four years secretary of the Sacred College, accompanied Cardinal Morone as his secretary, when he went as legate to Germany, and was secretary also of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, and was finally created a

[1] *Vallicellianis Patribus in primis addictus fuit; eorum ædem frequentavit, et in eâ sæpe populum e suggestu pia et diserta oratione a terrenorum amore avocavit, et ad cœlestium desiderium incendit.*—*Ciacconius*, tom. iv. p. 328.

cardinal; but, throughout this brilliant career, he was always the same, always the worthy disciple and friend of S. Philip. When he died he was buried in the Church of the Oratory, which he had loved so constantly in life; and he, moreover, bequeathed his library to the Congregation. And thus the Vallicella, which is stored with so many precious memories, preserves in its church and in its library an abiding record of this great cardinal, whom our saint so greatly loved.

To these cardinals many might be added who were either formed in the school of S. Philip and imbibed his spirit, or who extolled his virtues, and furthered the interests of the congregation and its members; but to speak befittingly of them all would delay us too long in our way. Among them, for instance, was Cardinal Crescenzio, a man of singular piety and virtue. He was a penitent of our saint from his youth, and was wont to say that Philip knew the state of his conscience better than he did himself, and that he never went near him without a sensible increase of fervour and devotion. He had the consolation of being present at the canonization of his holy master, and he appended his name to the Bull in these words: "I, Pietro Paolo, of the title of SS. Nereus and Achilleus, Cardinal Priest, a disciple of the said F. Philip." We might mention also Cardinal Emilio Sfrondato, who lived in the congregation under S. Philip's care from his youth, and there acquired the virtues which distinguished him as a cardinal. Nor should we omit Cardinal Visconti, who was also a penitent of our saint, and lived many years in the congregation, and was the first of the deputies appointed to aid S. Philip in its government. He was a worthy disciple of the saint, although he did not remain to the

end in the Oratory.[1] He was employed by the Popes in many high offices, and was made cardinal together with that great light of the Church, Robert Bellarmine, through the urgent recommendation of Baronio. Cardinals Bordini, Panfilio, Madrucci, and others, have left on record the loving veneration with which they regarded Father Philip. Bordini says: "Such was the opinion of Philip's sanctity, that almost all deemed it necessary to their advance in the spiritual life that they should place themselves under his direction. Every one went to consult Philip as he would consult an oracle."

Two illustrious cardinals wrote about S. Philip while he was still alive; and both were men of great genius and learning, filled with the love of God, and of great purity of life. Valerio, bishop of Verona, and Paleotto, archbishop of Bologna, were no unworthy representatives of the spirit of S. Basil and S. Gregory. Valerio was an indefatigable writer, and more than a hundred books and pamphlets are ascribed to him; Paleotto was also a learned writer, but he is better known from the high offices he held at the Council of Trent, and during the pontificate of Pius IV. Both knew Philip intimately and loved him tenderly, and both have written of him.

We have seen throughout this life that Philip was a saint of constant and manifest gladness of heart, and that this holy cheerfulness is one of the charms of his spiritual school. And as years went on, this bright cheerfulness and gaiety visibly increased, so that even in his extreme old age he was continually saying some-

[1] F. Alessio, the Barnabite, says, in a letter to the General of his Order, dated 19th March 1574: "Signor Alfonso Visconti is here in Rome, and is a spiritual son of Messer Filippo. He is always present at the Oratory, &c."

thing shrewd and playful, or doing something whimsical and laughable. So well known was this feature of Philip's character that each of these cardinals made it the subject of a book. Valerio wrote a dialogue upon it, which he entitled, *Philip, or Christian Cheerfulness;* and Paleotto, who is showing that the old age of a Christian has its gladness and its charm, instances Philip as the most finished type and specimen of an old age, at once saintly, joyous, and bright. The spring of Philip's perennial sunshine of soul was his boundless charity. Love is naturally unselfish, sportive, and gay; if our hearts are clouded and sad, it is too often because egotism has tainted our affections, and changed into a feverish and disquieting heat that genial warmth in which the heart expands and is glad.

Valerio wrote his Dialogue in 1591, during the reign of Gregory XIV. The personages in it are many; two are cardinals, Cusano and Frederic Borromeo; three of them, Cesare Baronio, Silvio Antoniano, and Ludovico di Torres, archbishop of Monreale, will be cardinals ere long; and there are also the abbate Maffa, F. Francesco Bordini of the Oratory, and our own S. Philip. Most of these personages are already sufficiently familiar to us. Of the abbate Maffa, we know no more than that he was a zealous and edifying priest, and a great friend of Philip's, and that in later years he was one of the most eager promoters of the saint's canonization; but we learn from the Dialogue itself that he looked upon ecclesiastical dignities as dangers to be shunned. F. Bordini was, as we know, the Secretary of S. Philip and the congregation, and destined to offices of great trust and importance. The archbishop of Monreale was greatly distinguished, in an age of great bishops, for his ability and learning, as well as for his piety. He

was one of Philip's devoted and beloved disciples; and he had the great consolation and honour of being appointed to draw up the first process in the canonization of his holy father and master. Baronio esteemed him highly, and entrusted to him the revision of his celebrated notes on the Roman Martyrology; so that he was another of that ever-enlarging circle of great and learned men we find gathered around S. Philip.

The Dialogue throws light, not only on the life and character of our saint, but on the changes in the state of the Church and of society, which had been effected in great measure by his influence. We no longer find the Ciceronian elegance of Bembo and of Sadolet, but in its stead, ripe and abundant learning and the living energetic spirit of the faith. There are still some lingering reminiscences of the classic influences, so mighty at the beginning of the century; but they are now merely incidental and ornamental, and have ceased to affect seriously the substance of the thought. In the form of his Dialogue, indeed, Valerio reminds us rather of Plutarch and Cicero, of Xenophon and Plato, than of S. Athanasius, S. John Damascene, S. Jerome, S. Augustine, or S. Anselm. It is rather Platonic than patristic in its place and time and circumstances; the banquet in a cool and sequestered *atrium*, the overarching vine, for adornment and for shade, and the choice and apt quotations from pagan writers. But it is worthy of remark that Valerio never puts into Philip's mouth one utterance of pagan wisdom; for him he draws only from the pure fountain of the wisdom that is from above. It startles us a little to find that the loftiest title given to S. Philip is the *Christian Socrates;* Holy Scripture and the annals of the Church might have furnished types nobler and more

becoming still, though Valerio writes: "Assuredly may that great man be styled a Christian Socrates who despises all outward things, who is the mightiest and most dreaded enemy of every vice, who follows after virtue, who is the master and teacher of sincerity and of a blameless life, who is in all his doings an example of humility; a man who gives himself in lavish charity to all, who compassionates the weaknesses of all, who aids all with his instructions and counsels, and commends all to the most High God with holy prayers, and who amidst so many cares preserves a constant and unclouded cheerfulness."

Valerio represents Silvio Antoniano as arriving one summer-day at the Palazzo di S. Marco, where the Pope then was, and entering an apartment where many pious and learned men were at table. Silvio's sunny smile diffused a general gladness, and they asked him whence he came. Antoniano replies that he is just come from the brightest and most cheerful spot in the whole world, the Oratory of the Vallicella; and he is then warmly congratulated on his happiness, and especially in that he enjoyed the friendship of that true christian Socrates, Philip Neri. Hereupon they all discourse, each in his own way, on the virtues and excellences of the saint; and an old religious remarks that what seemed to him the most wonderful thing in Philip was his continual gladness of heart, so that he was universally and most justly called the master of christian cheerfulness. Silvio replies that he had very recently been favoured with a striking proof of this, when, being very dangerously ill, he was visited by his dearest master and friend Philip. For Philip, with his bright smiling countenance, and his words of ineffable sweetness, and that breath of Paradise which lingered about

him, had urged him to receive Holy Viaticum so lovingly, that, although he was suffering most acute pain, he felt quite revived and filled with joy. And then, after some remarks had been made on this cheerful holiness of F. Philip, he yields to the wish of all present, and relates to them a conversation he had heard one day at the table of the fathers of the Vallicella. It was a feast day, and some of the fathers were busy in the church, so that there were at table only the eight personages whose names have been already mentioned. Their conversation was animated and joyous, for its subject matter was christian joy: and Silvio, who had taken part in it, proceeds to relate it minutely in the Palazzo di S. Marco.

Philip, who was at the head of the table, turned first to Cardinal Frederic Borromeo, who was seated next him, and said: "Do you, my son, in order to diffuse amongst us a holy gladness of heart, and to cheer our spirits, weighed down by cares so many and so great, discourse to us somewhat, I pray you, on christian cheerfulness; not as schoolmen speak, with rigour and precision, but simply as your heart suggests." It may be remembered that Cardinal Frederic was by nature disposed to solitude and the contemplation of divine truth; and hence he unfolds at great length, and with many instances and proofs, that true gladness of heart is found only in a solitary and contemplative life. He says amongst other things: "Whether we raise our eyes towards heaven or gaze on the loveliness of the earth; whether we consider the beauty of the sun, the number and variety of the stars, the harmonious working of the elements, the nature of plants and animals, and, above all, the soul of man created in the image of God; or whether we rise above all these things and behold with

the eyes of our soul the glory and the peace of the heavenly Jerusalem; in all these cases we are less alone than if many men were around us, and by the grace of God our hearts bound with gladness."[1] And he concludes with the words of S. Jerome: "O solitude, wherein are fashioned the living stones whereof is built the city of the Great King! O rugged desert, wherein we with such ease enjoy God!" This was Borromeo's opinion. The archbishop of Monreale was next interrogated by Philip, and made reply that in his judgment the greatest gladness a christian heart could know was found in gaining souls to Christ. And after many proofs he said: "I mean this; that even as the wise son is the glory of his father, so the penitent son, who is led back again into the way of salvation, is the joy of the bishop; and not of the bishop alone, but of all who in any degree help to set a soul free from the tyranny of its sins, and bring it back again to the righteous and most blessed service of God. I venture then to affirm, O my venerable fathers, that no gladness can equal this, that none is so solid as that which fills the hearts of the priests of God whenever they hear the sighs and behold the tears of some stricken penitent. Thus the great apostle calls all those whom he had edified by his preaching his joy and his crown. . . . My gladness, then, is in my choir; the loving spouse of my heart is the altar on which I daily offer sacrifice to God; my joy is that pulpit from which I proclaim the gospel of Jesus; my rejoicing is in my seminary, the ministering of the holy sacraments, and the thronging crowd of the faithful in my church." All present applauded the words of the

[1] The manuscript text of the Dialogue is in Latin. An Italian version of it was printed in Verona in 1800.

holy bishop, and especially the abbate Maffa, a man of gentle bearing, who greatly valued friendship. And hence S. Philip turned to him and said: "Well now, it seems to me that you too place all Christian gladness of heart in the labours of the pastoral office. But how can this be, since I have heard you say again and again that you shunned the office of bishop as an office which would strike even angels with dread, and that you felt the deepest compassion for bishops and priests, who have the charge of souls?" Maffa parried the charge by saying: "O dearest father of mine, O thou best Philip, wilt thou then never cease using against me that playful irony of thine?" And after solving, as he well knew how, the difficulty raised by the saint, he set forth at large his view of christian cheerfulness. Its fullest, most abundant source, he thought, was the friendship of the learned and the good, in which, he said, he found ineffable and unalloying sweetness. "The conversation of the wise and holy is daintiest food for mind and heart; and when I cannot have the living friend, I console myself with those who have gone before in the way of life, and listen to them in their writings. Among them I have many holy and learned friends, who cheer and strengthen me in my seeming loneliness." Baronio had listened to these discourses, and especially to that of Maffa, with a grave and pensive air which did not escape Philip's observation; and he therefore turned towards him, and said with loving gentleness: "How can you be sad when all around are discoursing of christian cheerfulness? Are you making now a meditation on death? I am quite prepared to hear you say that the christian's greatest gladness is to meditate on death. Come now, tell us freely your opinion." Philip knew well the sombre, pensive disposition of

his beloved son in Christ, and my readers will not have forgotten that Baronio's earliest sermons at the Oratory were all on death, and judgment, and eternity. Baronio then replied; and, as Philip had foreseen, maintained with many learned proofs, that there could be, to a christian, no higher joy than the meditation of death; and he concluded thus: "*Woe is me that my sojourning is prolonged; I have dwelt with the inhabitants of Cedar: my soul hath been long a sojourner! I was glad when it was said to me, We shall go into the house of the Lord! . . . I have a desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ!* O death, thou truest witness of our faith in Christ, thou nurse of hope and charity, thou minister of strength, companion of martyrdom, consolation of the penitent, solace of the wretched—thou who dost place us beyond all reach of peril, calm haven of rest, and portal of the Jerusalem above! He who loves thee not, O blessed death, is not truly wise; who abhors thee is a fool; who speaks ill of thee is mad." Then came the turn of Silvio Antoniano, who, in obedience to a sign from Father Philip, said, that in his opinion christian gladness was the portion of the man of fixed and steadfast soul, who has no care for things of earth, and cares only to do the will of God; and this he showed with many learned arguments. "I know," he said, "that all things are ruled by the providence of God, who either wills them thus, or permits them; and this, for the general good of His creatures, and to witness either to His mercy or His justice. My poverty suffices me then, and even pleases me; what is needed to sustain my life is quite enough for me, as the Sage has taught me; and my God, the Lord of heaven and earth, has made me rich in giving me but few desires. This is the true abundance. With this, my portion is the

ample revenue and affluence of poverty, nor do the vain and fleeting shadows of earthly things one whit affect me. . . . With this settled purpose of soul, with this contempt of all outward things, enriched thus by the bounty of God, I long as a pilgrim and a sojourner for the abiding city, the everlasting home of the saints." Thus spoke Silvio, nor could Philip refrain from applauding him, saying: "O my son, thou thinkest right well, and excellently well hast thou spoken. . . . The others, too, have spoken well, but thou hast truly hit the mark; the thing is even as thou sayest." There still remained Cardinal Cusano and Bordini. The latter lauded greatly the wisdom and the graceful eloquence of Antoniano, and added that he would not discuss the general question, but only say what most especially filled his own soul with gladness in the Lord. Bordini had travelled much, not only from devotion, but on many important affairs of the Church; and hence, he said, that pious pilgrimages, and the study of the holy institutions and usages of the Church, were to him an unfailing delight. "The fair and sacred city of Rome, its thronging memories, and the thoughts it evokes, all are to me," he said, "a fount of gladness ever springing and inexhaustible. I cannot move a step, or cast a look around me, but some memorial of Peter or of Paul, or some glorious martyr, or the sacred instruments of the passion, make my heart overflow with joy." He felt the same joy, he added, in Assisi and Bologna, in Germany and in Poland, and whenever he entered any pious sanctuary. Last came the turn of Cardinal Cusano, who, the reader will remember, had a singularly tender heart, and was most liberal of alms to the poor, and of sympathy to all in sorrow. He had intended to listen and be silent, but he was constrained to speak

by Philip's express command. He began by saying: "I have nothing so much at heart, my father, as to obey you; and I say at once, without preface, that I and my greatest consolation in doing good to others, find am convinced, that the deepest source of christian cheerfulness is christian beneficence. He who does good to another, becomes greater than himself, for he is the providence of him to whom he does good. And what purer source of consolation can there be than this excellence and dignity of doing good? I think the name of God Himself comes from His giving; for in truth, the merciful and compassionate God is every moment giving gifts to men, and showering blessings and graces down upon His creation as a whole, and on every separate man. Wherefore, believe me, no delight on earth can compare with that which comes of doing good, and showing mercy."

Valerio knew Philip well, and therefore, after showing in the Dialogue that he did not reject any of the opinions given, he put into his mouth a decision which embraces them all, and well displays the breadth of his sanctity. There was nothing narrow or confined about Philip; he would not have all souls cast in one mould, and led to christian perfection by the same path; he would have each go his own way, if only God were its beginning and its end. Philip had not intended to speak, for it was now near sunset; but Cardinal Borromeo turned towards him and said: "I see the day is already declining towards evening, and our discourse of christian joy has been longer than we had intended; yet let me entreat you that you would yourself say something to us on it. Deign, I pray you, to answer the questions I shall ask, though perchance they seem to you somewhat scholastic and formal. All

that has been said as yet is good; nevertheless vouchsafe to tell us in your few and weighty words: What then is this christian joyousness? what is its origin? what are its effects? what obstructs it? how may it be lost, and how best preserved? does the dying christian feel it? and what is its final cause or end?" Without further entreaty Philip made answer to this effect: "Interior christian joy is a gift of God, flowing from a good conscience, through contempt of all things of earth and contemplation of the things of heaven. It is preserved by meditating on death, by loving intercourse with learned and holy men, by the frequent use of the sacraments, by unslumbering watchfulness, and by doing good to all around us. It is increased by prayer without ceasing to God, and by great devotion to His saints. It is true indeed, that in this our darksome pilgrimage of life, our souls, though dear to God, feel still some little sadness by reason of the sin around us and of our own inbred misery; but yet our hearts are filled with transcending joy and gladness at thought of the fatherly rule of God over all His works; and, above all things, that He keeps us from sin, and enables us to resign ourselves wholly and for ever into His Hands. The *end* of our gladness of heart is, then, that it may grow and expand evermore, until it pass into the final and ever-during joy of our Lord in our heavenly home, that abode of peace and unimaginable beatitude. But note well that, so long as we are pilgrims in this land of exile, so long is sin the one hindrance of our joy; he who is the slave of sin cannot know its taste. Ambition is its greatest hindrance; the pleasures of sense are its deadly foes; so too, are vanity and detraction. And thus, O my son, our gladness here runs many risks, and is often lost amidst the business of

the world, the companionship of the ambitious, and the love of pomp and show. May I, O my sons, say to you freely what is in my heart? Bear with me then if I say, that the joy and gladness we are seeking keeps mostly far from courts of kings and princes, and I greatly fear from palaces of cardinals too, and bishops, above all if they be rich. Hardly do men truly take the warning given them by the Holy Ghost: *Set not your heart on riches;* for the sons of Adam, by an instinct of their corrupted nature, long ever to be richer and more mighty. Now they who love outward and visible things, and greatly prize them, are ever vexed with great fears, delusive hopes, and endless cares." And with these words of S. Philip the Dialogue ends.

I have dwelt so long on the Dialogue of Valerio that I can only briefly touch on Paleotto's book, *De Bono Senectutis*, the blessedness of old age. It was written in 1595, shortly before Philip's death; and the cardinal wrote from experience and feeling, for he was born in 1524, or, as some say, in 1522, and was therefore old himself. High dignity, wealth and power and influence, tend to make the sense of decay and the coming on of death matter of grave and pensive feeling; but the piety of Paleotto's whole life, his peaceful and unspotted conscience, his boundless charity, and the brightening hope of a life that will not end, dispersed for him the clouds which sometimes overcast the evening of life, and left it serene and even joyous. The beautiful old age of S. Philip, whom he had known and loved so many years, disposed him to feel its blessedness and its charm.

In this state of mind and feeling, Paleotto wrote his book, and strove to show the pre-eminent blessedness

of age. It was a daring task; for while all can feel the dignity and even the majesty of a venerable old age, few would allow it to be the best and happiest of the several stages of life. The cardinal brings forward many arguments in support of his assertion; but, as he tells us in his preface, he deemed that the strongest argument of all was the example of Philip Neri. He says that but few are convinced by proofs addressed to the reason, while all feel the force and the charm of example; that he might, indeed, have found in the records of the past, and especially in the annals of the Church, many instances of old men adorned with prudence, moderation, and sanctity, rich in experience and vigorous in every faculty; but that he had chosen the example of a living man, because what strikes the eye and may be touched with the hand, exerts on men a mightier influence. "Wherefore," he continues, "I have preferred to set before you a man still living, and whom we may all at any moment see, who has lived in Rome, that great theatre of all the earth, for fifty years and more. Not only has he spent his days so as to gain the praise of all, but he has in a most wonderful manner stirred up and aided others to live holy and religious lives. Him, therefore, I set before you as a living example of what old age may be; and he is F. Philip Neri of Florence, now in the eightieth year of his age, and who, like a time-honoured tree, has for so long a time reached forth to the people the abundant fruit of his virtues." After praising many of Philip's works, he concludes by saying: "Philip so resolutely despises all earthly good that, although esteemed and beloved by Popes and cardinals, he seeks no other dignity and honour than those which are eternal. In him, wisdom, religion, and piety, together with a marvellous

cheerfulness, gentleness, and simplicity, shine out with so great lustre, that whoever beholds that saintly old man is at once fascinated with him, and asks no further proof of the blessedness of a christian old age."

But before Paleotto's book could be printed, Philip had fallen asleep in the Lord. He would make no change in it, however, and only added to the preface a few touching words. He said that Philip was living now more truly than ever, living in the kingdom of God, living in the memory of all good men, living with a vigorous life in Rome in his countless spiritual children, and living with a life more vigorous still in his congregation of the Oratory, and in those his illustrious sons. And he concludes by saying that, in order to render the example of Philip more convincing and persuasive, he had prefixed to his book the portrait of that blessed old man, because the sight of him was enough to show how venerable and how full of happiness is the old age of a christian.

Let us now look at the general result of Philip's relations with so many cardinals. We know that the members of the Sacred College had a large share in the renewal of Catholic life in the sixteenth century. Among the cardinals who flourished in the earlier half of the century there were many men illustrious for their learning and their virtue; it is enough to mention the names of Sadolet, Contarini, Morone, and Reginald Pole. With them Philip had no relations at all, or none of which we can find any trace. They flourished while Philip was still a layman, or in the earlier years of his apostolate, when he was as yet but little known in Rome. But when we come to the great cardinals of the latter half of the century, we find that Philip knew them almost all, and exercised

an influence on most of them so special, that their very greatness came from him. If to the names of Paravicino, Visconti, and Aldobrandini, we add those of Baronio and Tarugi, we have at once five grand cardinals who were formed and trained to virtue within the walls of the Oratory. Around Baronio are grouped others, foremost amongst whom is the great Cardinal Bellarmine, less learned perhaps than Baronio, and with less power of imagination, but his superior in controversial vigour, and in exact and inexorable logic. We may reckon up ten illustrious cardinals who were Philip's penitents, and many more belonged to that large circle of intimate friends who were unconsciously moulded and perfected in his school. And thus, in the wise and mysterious disposition of Providence, Philip, who had always lived a poor and humble life, always seeking to be despised, who made no show of genius and learning, but strove to appear ignorant, foolish, and of no repute, was yet in his own way the father and the master of a large part of the Sacred College. These cardinals did not assuredly go to him for science, whether human or divine ; but they learned of him the true wisdom, that wisdom of which the love of God is the bright and unfailing light ; which is not, as human science often is, cold and joyless, but full of warmth and cheerfulness. And above all, they learned from him, what the generation before the Protestant revolt had too much forgotten, to be humble and lowly of heart amidst the splendours of their dignity, and to feel themselves pledged by it to the fuller service of God and His Church.

What we have said of the Sacred College may be said also of the members of the Roman aristocracy, an important part of the far-reaching apostolate of our

saint. Philip's life had, assuredly, little in common with that of the Roman lords of his day, who surrounded themselves with the magnificence and state of petty kings; they would feel that there was in it a gentle reproof, or at least an admonition. And moreover, Philip was not the man to dance attendance on the great, still less to flatter them. He was rather stern with them than otherwise, so far as a man so gentle and kindly could be stern. He took care they should feel that he did not set them at all above his poor, and the sick in the hospitals. And yet, he was in close and constant relations with the noblest families of Rome, and all treated him with the greatest reverence and affection. In the course of our narrative we have met with some of the most illustrious names of the Roman nobility; and now I can only mention the names of some who either witnessed his miraculous power, or were formed and guided by him in the way of perfection. Even now the memory of our saint is fresh and living in most of these families, and little things he did, and little words he spoke, are handed reverently down from father to son as traditions of inestimable value. Who can forget Philip's relations with the family of the Massimi? We find his penitents everywhere; Beatrice di Bonifazio of the Gaetani; Camillo and Girolamo Panfili, and the Countess di Santa Fiora of the Sforza family. Of the Crescenzi family he knew, and showed great kindness to, Costanzo del Drago, Vincenzio, Giambattista, and Paolo; amongst the Orsini he was the friend of Fabio, and was regarded as a singular benefactor by the Marchesa Giulia. Passing over many others, we may mention Francesco di Pietro of the Odescalchi, the Signora Vittoria of the Frangipani, and Marcantonio of the

Vitelleschi. He was the friend of Marcantonio Colonna, and the director of his wife Anna Borromeo; he predicted the recovery of Agnesina Colonna when she was ill; and amongst the Salviati he was the intimate friend both of the Duke and the Cardinal. These relations with princely families, and with others too numerous to mention, together with the reverence and love with which he was regarded by so many Cardinals, prelates, and men of learning, greatly enlarged the sphere and increased the fruit of Philip's apostolate, and gave him over all Rome a moral pre-eminence and sway.

CHAPTER XIV.

S. PHILIP AND THE INTELLECTUAL LIFE OF HIS CONGREGATION—THE POLISH COLLEGE IN ROME.

ALTHOUGH Philip lived a life hidden with Christ in God, yet a mind so active and far-seeing as his, ever zealous for the good of the Church, could not fail to watch with interest the intellectual movements of his time. The great religious and moral revival, of which the protestant revolt was the occasion, and Philip himself one of the main instruments, had naturally given a new direction to men's thoughts, and brought about a revolution in their studies and aims. Other causes contributed in their measure to this effect, but the consideration of them does not fall within our scope. In the days of Sixtus V., when Philip was an old man, the ardour with which the classic authors of antiquity had been studied and imitated was exhausted; it was rare to find a Greek scholar in Rome, and the elegant Latinity of Bembo and Sadolet was no longer heard. Baronio himself, who was unquestionably the most learned man of the latter half of the sixteenth century, was as a writer heavy and prolix. The study of Plato had yielded to the daring and perilous speculations of Telesio, Campanella, and Bruno; while Catholic philosophy had turned back again into the old ways. The dazzling literary splendour of the beginning of the century had faded

gradually away, and the writers of its closing years are stilted, vapid, and diffuse. The same decline is observable in the fine arts. Domenichino and the Caracci are, in simplicity and religious feeling, far below the great masters of the first half of the century. In poetry, indeed, we have the stately christian epic of Tasso, but after Tasso's death, we trace the first signs of the corruption and decay into which it so soon fell. So, too, with music, for which Palestrina had done what Tasso had done for poetry. Palestrina had created ecclesiastical music anew, but his successors and imitators made worse havoc of his compositions than the followers of Michael Angelo made of the noble works of their master. In short, towards the close of the sixteenth century we everywhere find traces of that turgid and inane school of literature and art which became a by-word in the seventeenth.

In regard of religion, the minds of men were drawn to the profound and patient study of sacred history and antiquities, and a new school of theology arose, which to a great extent discarded scholastic form; that school of which Baronio laid the foundation, and in which Bellarmine was the most accomplished master. These studies spread themselves throughout Europe with incredible rapidity; they were the training-school of the most vigorous thinkers and writers of that generation; they opened up new paths in the minds of men; and they contributed very largely to the discomfiture of protestantism, and to the reform of the Church's discipline and life. Now, although Philip wrote nothing himself, he was the ardent promoter of these studies, and in a sense the head and centre of all this grand movement; and in order to understand his influence upon it we must look for a moment at the

state of learning in Rome. In the Rome of that day the various *accademie* summed up and represented the activity of the learned; and celebrated as these academies were in the early part of the century, they were now languishing in decay, because they had ceased to express the thoughts that were uppermost in the minds of Catholics. Thus the great *accademia* of archæology, founded by Platina, and inspired with renewed life by Pomponio Leto, had sunk into disrepute. It had numbered amongst its members men of the greatest renown, such as Bembo, Castiglione, Colucci, and the bishop Marino Maffei; but its object was now too secular, too exclusively concerned with profane literature, to meet the wants and wishes of Catholics. The other academies, whose scope was more directly scientific, were employed only in expounding Aristotle, whom they regarded as the supreme and the only master of all science. That which was founded by Tolomei was called the *accademia* of moral science, but, instead of Holy Scriptures and the Fathers, it employed itself in explaining Vitruvius, and thus all the Roman academies were far behind their age. We may add to this that theological studies were almost inevitably confined to the great monastic bodies; the secular clergy either had not the time and the opportunity, or they lacked the energy, to engage in them. It was universally felt that some great change was needed, some revival of theological learning in Rome; and S. Charles expressed this feeling when he transformed one of these decaying academies into the *Accademia delle Notte Vaticane*. There, to Philip's great joy, dissertations were read on such subjects as the Beatitudes of the Gospel; and at these evenings at the Vatican were seen men like Cardinals Paolo Sfrondato, Gonzaga,

Silvio Antoniano, Valerio, Tolomeo Galli, and many others, all friends and disciples of his.

We have said that Philip availed himself mainly of the services of Baronio to give this new impulse to learning, and to turn it in the direction of sacred history. But Baronio was not his only instrument; the whole congregation of the Vallicella was for many years the centre of all these various studies. In gathering the members of his congregation the holy founder sought above all things for piety and virtue; but whenever the Providence of God sent him men of strong intellect and large culture, he welcomed them with gratitude and joy, as singularly precious gifts of heaven. He made them combine continuous study with the works of their ministry, and he directed all their studies of whatever kind towards one end, the great design of which Baronio was the fullest expression. Though he carefully abstained from betraying it, it was felt that he had a certain predilection for those of his sons who gave themselves to learning; and he showed this by the severe and incessant mortifications he laid upon them, in order to keep them grounded and rooted in humility. We have already seen this in the case of Baronio, and we see it again in his manner of dealing with Gallonio, one of the most learned fathers of the congregation. Thus, in the heat of summer he made him wear a fur cloak over his cassock in the streets of Rome; he would send for him to sing rude country ballads in presence of persons of high distinction; and he even kept him for some time from saying mass, with many other mortifications recorded in the notice of his life.

And now, let us look more closely at those first companions of our saint at the Vallicella, who sat at his

feet with the reverence of disciples. When Philip commanded Baronio to write the Annals of the Church, he indirectly gave a mighty impulse to the studies of all the congregation. Baronio was a man of great genius and varied learning, but he was not as yet sufficiently prepared for the immense work laid on him; and when he besought Philip to entrust it rather to Panvinio, he truly felt that it was a work out of all proportion with the learning he had then acquired. Panvinio was a man of transcending ability and energy, and when he died at the age of thirty-eight he was regarded by his contemporaries as a prodigy of genius and of learning. He left behind him part only of his great work on the Antiquities of Rome, which he intended to comprise in twenty books. Happily he had applied himself first of all to the christian part of his vast subject; and thus, when death closed his labours, Baronio was enabled to avail himself of the manuscripts and collections of his friend.[1] The work which Philip exacted from Baronio was so vast that he had continual need of help and counsel, and he found both mainly in the congregation itself. Although the other fathers took no direct part in the composition of the Annals, or of the notes to the Martyrology, or the other works of Baronio, yet they were always at hand to help in clearing up doubtful points, or in gathering materials and making researches. Thus, in the notes to the Martyrology, under date of the 10th May, he writes: "In order that I may not appear to be taking credit to

[1] Maffei has given us, in the fourth volume of his *Verona illustrata*, a list of the contributions of this learned man to sacred and profane literature, and the illustrious Cardinal Mai has published some of his manuscript works. Jacopo Gaddi says of him: "If we look at what he wrote, we wonder how he could have found time to read; and if we examine the prodigious erudition of his books, we are amazed that he could have found time to write them."

myself for the labours of others, I declare that I owe to F. Antonio Talpa, prefect of the Library of our congregation, the Acts which I here publish, and all the information obtained from the archives of the churches outside of Rome, of which I make so great use in these notes. That father merits the highest praise for the diligence and care with which he has collected these materials." And in his letters and elsewhere, he expresses with great humility and gratitude, his obligations to several other fathers. He never printed a word which had not been carefully read and considered by Talpa, Ancina, Bordini, and others; neither distance, nor difficulty of transmission, dispensed with this; and we have seen that when F. Talpa was in Naples, every line that Baronio wrote was sent to him there. In a letter to Tarugi, who was then in Naples, Baronio says, in reference to the printing of the first volume of the Annals: "Since it will be necessary that the Index should be ready by the time the volume is printed, and since I cannot attend to it myself, I am disposed to lay the burden of compiling it on our fathers Tommaso Galletti and Francesco Bozio. I will send it you page by page, and sheet by sheet, as it is printed." It is clear that this brotherly way of claiming the help of his brethren, and submitting all he wrote to their examination, was not only to him a discipline of humility, and in them an exercise of charity, but to the whole congregation a constant incentive to learned research. All were eager to lighten the toil of Baronio, to throw light into some dark corner of the past, to unravel some tangle of difficulty, and thus all kept pace in some degree with the advance of the great book. And in this way Philip diffused throughout the congregation, together with the true

ecclesiastical spirit, a zeal for learned theological research.

We trace the same intention in the great and continuous care he took of the Library of the Vallicella, which we must remember was formed under his eye and by his exertions, and which he left at his death magnificently furnished. It may seem, at first sight, strange that the same saint who, in his youth, sold his books and gave himself up to the quest of a higher wisdom than he could find in them, should take such pains in his old age to provide so vast a library for his congregation. But that incident in Philip's earlier life was something extraordinary, and dependent upon his peculiar vocation; he never regarded it as a precedent for others. The Catholic priest should be, indeed, before all things and above all things, filled with the love of God, and an humble disciple in the school of Jesus; but that love, and the teaching of that school, should be in his mind the germs of profound and accurate and universal knowledge. No otherwise can he be the light which *shines to all that are in the house,* and *the salt of the earth.* Philip knew this well, and therefore spared no pains to provide his sons with abundance of books. He entrusted the selection of them and their arrangement to F. Talpa, himself a learned man, and a most competent judge. The fact that several cardinals left their libraries at their death to the Vallicella, shows that Philip had impressed on the Congregation a character of learned research, and that the cardinals knew that their bequests would be grateful to him. It was not certainly without his consent that all the fathers, his companions, gave to the Library all their books of value. In the Vallicella we see the libraries of Baronio, of the two brothers Bozio, and the invaluable collection of F. Stazio, a Portuguese who

joined the congregation in 1581. Ugolino and Colloredo, and other penitents of the saint, bequeathed their books to the Vallicella; and thus Philip's library grew to be celebrated in Rome for the number and value of its books, and was referred to with admiration by Mabillon and Montfaucon, from whose sentence there lies no appeal. There, precious above all, is that little compartment in which are treasured the few books which once were Philip's own, and which were placed by himself in the Vallicella Library on its opening.[1]

Philip gave, moreover, another signal proof of his eager desire to perpetuate in his congregation a tradition of learned research. Knowing that his friend the abbate Crescenzio had in his possession a valuable collection of manuscripts belonging to the Abbey of S. Eutilio, he either asked for them, or eagerly accepted them when offered to him. He then applied to Pope Clement, and obtained from him permission to accept them on behalf of the congregation; and thus the greater part of the precious collection of manuscripts now in the Vallicella Library was placed in it by the hands of S. Philip.[2]

Nor did the first companions of our saint disappoint the expectations of their beloved father and master. Though he kept them almost constantly at work in hearing confessions, preaching, attending to the sick,

[1] The Library of the Vallicella was the first in Rome open to the public. The room itself and its furniture were designed by Bernini.

[2] In Codex P. 206, of the Vallicella Library, we find these words :— "I, Jacopo Crescentio, Abbot of S. Eutilio, hereby attest that I gave to the Blessed Philip Neri of holy memory, and through him to his congregation of the Oratory in Rome, the under-mentioned ancient manuscripts on vellum, to wit: (here follows a catalogue of the MSS.) all of which were in the above-mentioned Abbey of S. Eutilio. And Pope Clement, of holy memory, gave verbal permission to the said Blessed Philip, as he himself told me, that I might give them to him as I have done, &c."

and especially in visiting the hospitals, we find among them several writers of greater or less merit, but all entitled to respect, even after the lapse of three centuries. Of these the chief are the two brothers Bozio, Gallonio, Talpa, Bordini, and Ancina; and to these we may add the name of F. Giovanni Severano, who, though he did not join the Oratory until 1589, lived six years under Philip's rule. He is worthy of especial mention, because Soto says he was, of all the Oratorians, the best skilled in music; and because he took part, as we shall see, in the preparation of one of the most important works published at the beginning of the seventeenth century.[1] I propose to give at the end of this volume a list of all the writings of the companions of our saint, the first generation of fathers of the Oratory, in order to show the vigour of intellectual life which Philip breathed into his congregation.[2]

The studies of the first fathers of the Oratory were naturally influenced by the general tendencies of their time, and were animated with a glowing zeal for the defence of religion; and Philip gently drew them towards the history and antiquities of the Church, and that positive theology which rests principally on the thorough study of Holy Scriptures and the Fathers. Those who showed vigour of intellect and love of learning were set to work more or less in the line of Baronio; his great Annals impressed on the congregation a family character and spirit. So far as we can trace any predilection, it is for ecclesiastical biography. They had caught the spirit of their father, who began the sermons of the Oratory with the lives of the saints,

[1] Severano was a native of San Severino, and was sent to live for some time in the house of the Oratory in that town. He afterwards returned to Rome, and died at the Vallicella.

[2] See the original Life, vol. ii. app. 2.

narrated in an animated and reverent manner. Many of them, like our saint in his earlier days, applied themselves to sacred poetry. Thus when Bordini, who was afterwards archbishop of Avignon, wished to narrate the life of Pope Sixtus V., he did not write a history or an essay, but published a volume of Latin poems, each of which had for its subject some one work of that great Pope. We may still see one of these engraved on the column of Trajan, and another on the column of Antoninus, both of which were erected by Sixtus V. Even the venerable Giovenale Ancina sought in poetry a vent for his impassioned devotion, and wrote many poems on our Blessed Lady and S. Mary Magdalene, besides several madrigals and roundelays. When he made his escape from Rome to San Severino in the Marches, that he might not be compelled to accept the bishopric of Mondovì, to which Clement VIII. had appointed him, he wrote a hymn in the form and style of the B. Jacopone da Todi. While he was still a student at Padua he wrote, on the eve of the battle of Lepanto, a Latin poem, dedicated to the Doge of Venice, and intended to rouse the faithful to join the league against the Turks; and then commemorated the great victory in a poem in Italian, in which he extols the virtues and the courage of Pius V. His poetry has been allowed to sink into an unmerited oblivion; the specimens of it given in his recently published life are remarkable for their simplicity and tenderness, as well as for the delicate beauty of their imagery, and reveal to us a noble soul, all inflamed with the love of God.[1]

The celebrated work of Baronio on the Roman Martyrology was, with whatever inevitable imperfec-

[1] See the beautiful life of the Ven. Giovenale Ancina, by Monsig. Aniceto Ferrante, of the Naples Oratory. Naples, 1870.

tions, the first attempt to apply a just and sober criticism to the ancient legends of the saints, and prepared the way for the Bollandists and their followers. Baronio also wrote a life of S. Ambrose, which he inserted into his Annals; and another of S. Gregory of Nazianzum, which was incorporated by the Bollandists. Bordini was the author of a life of S. Teresa, and the translator of the life of S. John of God. In a letter of his to Tarugi, who was then in Naples, he says: "I send your reverence some trifling fruit from my garden, that is to say, the life of S. John of God, which I translated in the winter from Spanish into Italian. It will help to excite in the hearts of your novices a great desire for mortifications."[1] In addition to his life of S. Philip, Gallonio has left us a volume containing the lives of the holy Virgins of Rome, together with those of Saints Flavia Domitilla, Nereus and Achilleus, and other martyrs. His great work on the sufferings of the holy Martyrs was translated into Latin and French, and has maintained its high reputation down to our own day; Tiraboschi pronounces it a work of very great learning, and it incidentally throws much light on the early history of the Church.[2] Gallonio wrote also in defence of an opinion on S. Gregory the Great expressed by Baronio in his Annals, and impugned by the learned Mabillon. Besides these, he published the lives of the blessed Margherita Colonna and of several saints,

[1] This letter is dated May 30th, 1587. It is preserved in the archives of the Congregation of Naples.

[2] While Gallonio was employed on this book, Pompeo Ugonio, a disciple of Philip's, was writing, at the saint's suggestion, a work on the Sacred Stations, which treats also of the holy martyrs and saints with a profusion of learning. This work is still held in great esteem. See a *Ragionamento* or discourse *Della coltura scientifica di S. Filippo*. Rome, 1854.

together with a treatise on the *cultus* of uncanonized saints. Of the brothers Bozio, Francesco, the younger, has left us a life of S. Peter; the elder, Tommaso, wrote an essay on the *cultus* of our blessed Lady, which was followed by her Life, and that of S. Pulcheria. These examples are enough to show how S. Philip and his companions loved the records of the saints. It entered naturally into his great work of reform that he should strive to set before a corrupted and enfeebled generation these grand examples of the saints of old in their own simple beauty, and revive and sweeten the tainted air by diffusing throughout it the odour of sanctity.

The two brothers Bozio, and Tommaso especially, greatly distinguished themselves by their researches in every department of Christian antiquities, and by their vigour and success in the controversy with protestants. To the former branch of study belong the ten volumes of the *Annali di Antichità* by Tommaso Bozio, and to the latter his writings on the Church, and on its liberty and authority; he left also in manuscript, Commentaries on the Psalms of David and the Book of Job, and a refutation of the political and social errors of Machiavelli. His brother Francesco treated with consummate skill many questions of history and antiquities, in his work on the temporal monarchy and the jurisdiction of the Church. Of F. Talpa we will add nothing to what has been already said, although his many writings well merit fuller consideration.[1]

Another proof of Philip's wish to cherish a spirit of literary research in his congregation is seen in his resolve that it should have a printing-press of its own.

[1] *Memorie degli Scrittori Filippini*, by Villarosa. Naples, 1846.

It was set up in the Piazza of the Vallicella, almost adjoining the house, and was placed under the direction of Andrea Brugiotti, a brother of the Oratory, and an amanuensis of Baronio's; and hence issued the volumes of the Annals until the Vatican press charged itself with their publication.

But there was one subject which, more than any other, excited the interest of the fathers, and gave unity to their efforts and studies. It was the will of Providence that at this time the Roman catacombs should be thrown open, and that from those long closed and almost forgotten sepulchres of the past a new and unexpected light should be cast on the history and antiquities of the Church. Those same catacombs, in which Philip had for so many years lived and prayed, were about to be carefully examined and studied; and we may be sure that he followed with delight the course of discovery. It is said by some that he gave the first impulse to this investigation; and it is certain that his love of all that related to the history of the early ages of the Church inspired his sons to those labours which opened to the Catholic Church a fount of teaching and of truth long sealed. While the heretics of the north were disputing the antiquity of Catholic doctrine and practice, it pleased God to awaken in the hearts of learned men a desire to examine the rich bequest of primitive times stored up in the catacombs. The emblems and paintings, the symbols and inscriptions, and all that had lain for so many ages hidden and unknown in those sacred recesses, were brought out at the moment of deadliest peril, to give their witness to the contested teaching of the Church. And thus the Annals of Baronio, and the *Roma sotteranea* of Bozio, improved by F. Severano and brought to perfection in our own

days by the learned de Rossi, cast light on each other, and are seen to be in marvellous and perfect harmony.

The first learned man who, in the sixteenth century, turned his thoughts towards the illustration of the catacombs was that Onofrio Panvinio, the friend of Baronio and S. Philip, of whom we have so recently spoken. But Panvinio did not attempt to explore the catacombs, to collect and classify their monuments, and construct their history, as has since been so fully done. He collected every notice of them to be found in ancient writers, and found clear indications of forty-three catacombs in Rome alone, of which hardly one was known. On the death of Panvinio in 1568, other learned men felt a desire to see the catacombs with their own eyes, and to explore their mysteries. We are told that Aldus Manutius and others tried to penetrate into one or two of the Christian catacombs, in the hope of finding some illustration of pagan antiquities; but their efforts were of little avail. "To these," says de Rossi, "succeeded other visitors, whose one object was to collect and study the venerable records of the Christian centuries; and foremost amongst them were the fathers of the Oratory, who, under the inspiration of their saintly founder, Philip Neri, felt a singular love and devotion for the Acts of the Martyrs, the sacred monuments of Rome, and all that bears upon the history of the Church. The Library of the Vallicella, that most precious heritage bequeathed to us by those fathers, whose learning and ardour in research were equalled only by the holiness of their lives, is a complete museum of the archæological science of their time. In the pontificate of Gregory XIII., when Baronio was compiling his famous notes to the Roman Martyrology, and S. Philip was exacting from him his

daily task-work on the Annals of the Church, the discovery of a subterranean Christian burial-place, with its paintings and its monuments, must have fallen on the minds of men as a spark which kindles a great fire, never again to be extinguished. And so it came to pass."[1]

In 1578, ten years after the death of Panvinio, some workmen, who were digging out *pozzolana* in the vineyard of Bartolomeo Sanchez, on the Via Salaria, came unexpectedly upon one of the galleries of a christian cemetery, adorned with paintings and inscriptions, and containing a few sculptured sarcophagi. This discovery was hailed with rapture by the learned; it cast a light, as unhoped for as it was brilliant, on the subjects which then engrossed their attention, and all Rome flocked to see the newly found cemetery. Baronio was one of the earliest visitors; he returned again and again, and was at each visit more profoundly affected. He tells us himself that "Rome was astounded to find that in its midst, and beneath its own suburbs, there were concealed cities, once colonies of Christians in the times of persecution, and still filled with innumerable sepulchres. And so it came to pass that Rome now beheld and fully understood what before it had only read in books, or had at least caught an uncertain glimpse of in some almost inaccessible cemetery; and we all, seeing with our own eyes the very things which Jerome and Prudentius speak of in their books, were filled with an amazement beyond belief."[2]

In this first cemetery, so unexpectedly discovered, were found almost all those records and memorials of

[1] *Roma sotteranea Cristiana*, by the Commendatore G. B. de Rossi.

[2] Annals, ad an. 130, § 2. He speaks also of the Roman cemeteries, of his visits to them, ad an. 57, § 113, and 220, § 8, 9.

the past, which are the foundation of what is called the *science* of subterranean Rome. There were *arcosolia,* or arched tombs, adorned with fresco-paintings, two sculptured sarcophagi of marble, and some epitaphs in Greek and Latin. Here were found the greater part of those expressive symbols, which have been since found repeated in all the catacombs. The Good Shepherd and the *Orante,* Noe with his ark, Daniel in the den of lions, Moses in the act of striking the rock, scenes from the life of Jonas, the sacrifice of Isaac, the three children in the fiery furnace, Jesus multiplying the loaves, the calling of Lazarus from his grave, the christian feast of love, and various pastoral scenes; all these were found rudely sketched in this earliest discovered cemetery. The few inscriptions, too, which were then found, breathe that air of peace, simplicity, and tenderness which makes the Roman catacombs so soothing and so dear.

Although the investigation of this catacomb was pursued with care, and everything discovered in it was submitted to a minute analysis, the results were of but small importance. Baronio's friend, de Winghe, a young Flemish layman, from whose labours he expected much, died at Florence, leaving his work unfinished; and moreover, no one carried his researches beyond this first discovered catacomb. The true "Columbus of subterranean Rome," as he has been justly called, was Antonio Bozio, a man who possessed every qualification for such an exploration, and who laid the foundation of "the science of the catacombs." He was a man of great genius and great learning, inured to toil and fearless of danger; one who could combine minute examination of localities with careful study of books, and interpret the one by the other.

In the judgment of de Rossi, who speaks of him with a certain feeling of reverence and devotion, he knew everything about the catacombs that could be known in his day.

Bozio was intimately connected with Baronio and the fathers of the Vallicella, but we have no documentary evidence that he had any personal relations with S. Philip. It is affirmed by Mgr. Fabio Montani that he was both a penitent and a disciple of our saint, and that Philip urged him to his prodigious labours in the catacombs.[1] This is the conviction of many learned men in Rome at this day, who aver that it rests on a constant and unbroken tradition. It is enough that Bozio was deemed worthy to be a disciple of Philip's, and, when we read the account of his first visit to the catacombs, we can yield assent to the Roman tradition. It was on the 10th December 1593, that, accompanied by Pompeo Ugonio and others, he penetrated into a catacomb about a mile distant from S. Sebastian's, and, finding his way into a lower level, he went so far that he lost his way, and his light failed him. In narrating his peril and escape, he says with inimitable simplicity: "I began to fear that I should pollute with my vile body the sepulchres of the martyrs."[2]

Even if we do not owe to S. Philip's inspiration the magnificent results of Bozio's labours in the catacombs, the relations of that great man with the Vallicella

[1] See the *Ragionamento* of Montani before referred to. He adds: "Whenever he made any fresh and important discovery he ran to communicate it to Philip, who, in his great devotion to the holy martyrs, and his exultation at the vindication of the *cultus* rendered them by the Church, would burst into tears, embrace Antonio, and kneel with him to venerate the relics of those athletes of Christ."

[2] De Rossi, *Roma Sotterranea Cristiana.* [See also the account of Bozio's labours and the estimate of his genius and character at the beginning of the invaluable *Roma Sotterranea* of Canons Northcote and Brownlow. London, Longmans, 1879.]

were frequent and intimate. Though he laboured with prodigious activity for thirty years, he died before his work could be completed and published. He wrote it at first in Latin, and the manuscript of this original work is in the Vallicella Library, where it was examined by de Rossi. He then wrote it again in Italian, and the only manuscript of this translation known to de Rossi is also at the Vallicella (Codex G. 31). While Bozio was working at the completion of his gigantic undertaking, F. Severano wrote a book on the visits to the seven churches, in order to keep alive the spirit of that devotion. In this book he gave a sketch of the Roman catacombs, and was thus led to speak of many things which are treated in the great work of Bozio. When Cardinal Barberini, a great patron of men of learning, heard of this book of Severano's, he was urgent that it should be revised and examined by Bozio himself; and Bozio warmly praised the book, encouraged its publication, and, as he himself tells us in a letter preserved at the Vallicella, withdrew from his own work whatever had been already said by Severano, since "it was needless to say the same things twice." In 1629, Bozio died before his great work was completed and printed, and it was feared that the toil of so many years might be thrown away; but Cardinal Barberini took the matter in hand, and entrusted the publication of the volume to F. Severano, as being the only man in Rome who knew Bozio's plans, and was qualified to complete his work. After three years of assiduous application, Severano brought out the *Roma Sotterranea*, which is even now regarded as a work of inestimable value. His own additions were numerous and important; the first chapter, on cemeteries in general, is his, and so is the whole of the last book. Besides these additions, he revised the whole work,

improved its arrangement, and sometimes abridged its text; and thus Severano had an important part in the production of this great book, which was the first to unveil the wonders of ancient Christian Rome, to open out a new region of archæological research, and to brand with the reproach of novelty the speculations of protestantism. In a spirit befitting a true son of S. Philip he says nothing of himself, but ascribes the whole book to Bozio, whom he extols with well-deserved praise. Severano then translated the whole work into Latin, but this translation was never printed; the manuscript is preserved still at the Vallicella. Some years later, F. Aringhi, of the Oratory, published a *Roma Sotterranea* in Latin, which was only a compilation from Bozio and Severano, with a few additions of little value.

In the work of Manni, to which reference has been already made, there is a "Discourse on the literary friendships of S. Philip Neri." In it he mentions, among the men of letters who grouped themselves around our saint, Clementi, Giacomelli, bishop of Belcastro, Jacopo Marmitta, an esteemed poet of that day, Cardinal Silvio Antoniano, Giovanni Animuccia, the two sons of Signor Caccia, the Blessed Alessandro Sauli, and D. Giovanni Agostino Gallicio, general of the Barnabites.[1] It would be easy to gather, from the memoirs of the time, the names of many other learned men, especially cardinals and bishops, who belonged to the circle of Philip's friends; but we pass them over to speak of one towards whom our saint showed a singular affection, and who has this additional claim on our notice that he was a proficient in branches of knowledge but little cultivated at that time.

[1] *Alcuni punti della vita di S. Filippo illustrati*, by Domenico Maria Manni, of the Academy of Florence, 1785.

At the close of the sixteenth century the natural sciences were still in their infancy, and it was not until the time of Galileo that they seriously engaged the attention of the learned. Among the friends of our saint, however, was Mgr. Michele Mercati, of S. Miniato, a diligent observer of nature and an enthusiastic investigator of its laws. He was physician to the Pope and a prelate; and his desire to multiply the resources of his art combined with his natural taste to make him an eager student of science. He was a great botanist, too, and he formed in the Vatican gardens the first collection of exotic plants seen in Italy.[1] This learned and pious man was one of Philip's penitents and most intimate friends; he was the friend, indeed, of all the fathers of the Vallicella, and especially of Baronio and the Blessed Giovenale Ancina. Mercati was often ill, as Philip said, from over-application to study; and in the letters which passed between the congregations of Rome and Naples we find continual mention of the state of his health, just as if he were one of themselves. In 1582, he had a very serious illness, and his father, who was also a physician, despaired of his recovery, and poured out all his grief to Philip. The saint bade him be of good cheer, and assured him that he might put away all his apprehensions, for that his son would certainly recover. "But you do not see," said the aged father, "that it is now a question of hours!" "Be of good cheer," said Philip again; "have I not told you he will not die?" The year after, Mercati was again dangerously ill, and Philip, in his great affection, had him removed to the Vallicella, that he might be better cared for; and once again he recovered. In 1592, we find

[1] Renazzi, *Storia dell' Università degli studj di Roma*, vol. iii. p. 210.

him at S. Miniato al Tedesco for change of air after another illness, and while there he received the following letter from Philip: "The letter of your most illustrious and at the same time most reverend Lordship gave me great joy in many ways. First, it has given me very great pleasure to learn that you have arrived safely, and that your journey, instead of doing you harm, has much improved your health; for that is one of the greatest pleasures and most earnest wishes of my heart at this time. And then, it is another great joy to me that you are gaining health and strength daily. For this I thank God, and I hope that the purity of the air, and the satisfaction you feel in being with good and congenial friends, will very soon restore you to your wonted state of health. I am also delighted with your lovely Rocca, its fair gardens and its fruit-trees, and its woods and thickets too, because you find delight in them; and I enjoy their charm through you and with you. You enjoy them in actual presence, and I enjoy them by sympathy with you in your joy, and so I have my full part in the pleasure and content you feel." The saint then goes on to speak with tender affection of Mercati's family: "It was a further consolation to my heart to hear that your sisters, who are spouses of Jesus Christ, have not forgotten me; and this in great part for the sake of your father of blessed memory, who, while he lived, was wont to feel so kindly towards me and speak of me so kindly, because of the native goodness of his heart which made him think well and speak still better of all with whom he had to do. Those daughters of his have inherited his goodness, and walk in his footsteps. I greet them with holy and cordial affection, rejoicing that in them the grace of God perfects his natural gifts, and leads them on to

perfection in the spiritual life. As to that great personage whom they wish to see raised to the highest place, their wish may be excused by reason of their good and simple intention; but it seems to me better to pray in general terms for him, that God would grant him whatever may seem best to His divine Providence. And thus being entirely yours, I implore for you all holy consolation. (3rd May 1591.)" Two years later, Mercati died in Rome; he was assisted during his last moments by his beloved father and master, and his end was peace. We read in the processes that as the saint had, on former occasions, predicted against all hope the recovery of Mercati, so in this last illness he foretold his death. He sent to him to tell him not to study so much, for that if he did he would die very soon; and, so when Mercati died six weeks after writing a book, Philip shook his head and said: "Poor Mercati! he would study too much."[1]

Among the learned men who were friends of our saint we may reckon the physicians who attended him in his various illnesses with love and veneration. Of these I will mention one only, Andrea Cesalpino of Arezzo, who was not only a physician of great eminence and skill, but an accomplished botanist, and an ardent student of nature, to whom belongs the glory of having first observed and proved the circulation of the blood. He was professor of botany in the Roman University, and was also the first to discover and explain the generation of plants. Philip loved him much, and kept several of his books by him; we may see them still in the little case of the saint's books in the Vallicella Library. Four years after S. Philip's death,

[1] *Vita di Michele Mercati*, by Majelli.

Cesalpino wrote an essay on the miraculous incorruption of the body of the saint; and this essay remains to attest the fervent piety as well as the skill and learning of this distinguished man.

Let us now pass from Philip's learned friends to consider one of his great works, which has not been mentioned by his biographers. All the works of our saint have a character of universality, because they are a continuation of the work of Jesus Christ, the Teacher and Lord of all. He was *a burning and a shining light* in the centre of Christendom, and his light spread far and wide throughout the whole Church. Though he lived and worked in Rome, we find him caring for the spiritual welfare of distant lands, not capriciously or from mere impulse, but as the Providence of God opened his way. Thus, we have seen that in early life his heart was fixed on India. Later on, his attention was fixed on the heretics of the north, who were compiling their Centuries at Magdeburg, and he resolved to raise an embankment to resist this inundation of false teaching. And from time to time we find him turning to the cities of Italy—to Naples, Milan, Florence, and others, and labouring for their good. And it is a joy to think that his heart beat with love for Poland, that land so dear to us for the constancy and faith with which it endures, as well as for the noble accord in which it blends the love of country with the love of Holy Church.

During the pontificate of Gregory XIII. two large colleges were founded in Rome to provide a supply of learned and pious priests for Germany and England, in both of which the protestant heresy was dominant. We know that Philip frequently went to visit the English College opposite S. Girolamo; and knowing

that on their return to England they would very probably become martyrs of the faith, he would embrace them and salute them with the words the Church addresses to the Holy Innocents: *Salvete, flores martyrum.* The records of the time do not tell us whether our saint was wont to visit the German College, but they bear witness to the tender affection he displayed towards the many Polish youths who were living in Rome without any college of their own. The state of Poland was mournful even then, and it was quite natural that Philip should long to come to the aid of a nation so generous and so faithful. Poland was, moreover, rightly regarded as an important bulwark against heresy. Towards the middle of the century protestantism had tainted the whole of the north of Europe, and was making great efforts to obtain possession of Poland. It is sufficient to say, that although the king, Sigismund Augustus, was nominally a Catholic, things had come to such a pass that heretics occupied some of the Episcopal sees, and that a majority of the Senate, a powerful body in Poland, was protestant. The nobles were protestant in their sympathies; and although the great body of the people remained true to the faith, a considerable number had accepted the new errors. This deplorable state of things did not, however, last long; in the reign of Stephen Batthori, a king of great piety and valour, the Catholics regained their pre-eminence. Still they had around them numerous and powerful enemies, and they had great need of champions who would overcome heresy by their piety, their virtues, and their learning. To supply this need, a number of young Poles were sent to Rome to be trained and equipped for the conflict which was raging in their distracted country. The success of the German and

English colleges[1] had inspired hopes that Poland, too, might succeed in having its college; but the difficulties were many and great, and time and patience were needed to overcome them. Philip then took these young Poles under his protection; he formed them into a college, and provided for their instruction in theology and science, and for their training to a life of christian perfection. He directed F. Talpa to draw up a rule for them, and he supported this college for many years from the resources furnished him by the charity of the Romans, without any aid from the Polish Government. He had the consolation of seeing the first results of this great work, and made many efforts to establish it on a solid and permanent footing; but though the King of Poland felt its importance, and was favourably disposed towards it, the troubles of the time prevented the accomplishment of this useful design.

When, however, Philip's Polish college was opened with a goodly number of students, the importance of the work was felt by many eminent personages in Rome, and the saint received many expressions of thanks from Poland. Thus the Archbishop of Gnesen wrote a letter, which is interesting, not only by reason of the high rank of the writer, but because it gives us a clear idea of the college itself, and of the part taken by S. Philip and the congregation in its formation. This letter has never been published, and is as follows:—

To the very reverend Father Philip Neri, Priest in S. Girolamo, my most dear and honoured friend.

"Very reverend Father and dearest Friend in Christ,—I learn to my exceeding delight from the

[1] Gregory XIII. had also founded a college for the Greeks, and in 1584 another for the Catholic Maronites of Mount Lebanon. Muratori, *Annali.*

Reverend Stanislaus Repki, keeper of the seal of the Sacred Penitentiary, that your fathers of the Congregation of the Oratory of S. Maria in Vallicella have, by your direction, undertaken to educate certain Polish youths, and to give them instruction in canon law. We are persuaded that the purpose and the work of these fathers will be very useful to us in the exercise of our Episcopal ministry, in feeding the flock redeemed with the precious Blood of Christ and to our care committed, and in restoring among us ecclesiastical discipline, in these evil times fallen into decay. For this undertaking of your Paternity, so full of christian compassion and charity, and so suitable and useful to this our kingdom, wherein it has pleased the Lord to appoint me, all unworthy as I am, to the place and office I hold, I can do no less than write to thank your reverend Paternity as cordially as I can. And I do this, not in my own name alone, but in the name of all those who, under the obedience of the Apostolic See, have charge of souls in this kingdom. In truth, with the help of the learned and well-equipped men who are destined, we trust, to come forth from your school of virtue and nursery of saints, we shall all be better able to discharge the duties of our office and win back those who are now far from the way. And more especially, now that the piety of our most serene and wise king Stephen gives us ground of hope that we shall see some amendment in what concerns the Church, it is certainly most reasonable that help should come to us from Rome, the centre of ecclesiastical rule, whence comes forth the rule and standard of faith and piety and sacred discipline for all the rest of the world. It is most reasonable that there should be sent us from Rome good men and fearing God, ministers and instruments

of the wishes and counsels of the king, and of ours, capable of beating back the onset of those with whom we have daily to contend for the faith and for Rome itself. This charity of yours is of a nature to conciliate to your holy and eternal city the affections of those who are now rebels against Christ; for they will see with their own eyes that in Rome no efforts and no cost are spared to provide for the wants of Catholics of whatever nation they may be, and to furnish them with learned and holy pastors. I trust it may be in the heart of your Paternity to persevere in the good work you have begun with such compassionate charity, and not to rest till you have seen it completed; for the blessings which will flow to us from your institute are immense. For myself and the other most reverend bishops of this kingdom, I can promise that we will not fail to promote the pious and laudable undertaking of your Paternity, and to seek its prosperity, both by word and deed, in every place and at every time. Of these things the Reverend D. Stanislaus Neski, whom his Majesty is sending to Rome with his most illustrious nephew, will treat with your reverend Paternity. May God keep your Paternity in health! From Lovitz, 19th September 1583.

Of your very Reverend Paternity,

The most affectionate friend in Christ,

STANISLAUS KAM KOMSKI,

By the Grace of God Archbishop of Gnesen, Legate of the Kingdom of Poland and Primate."[1]

This letter naturally encouraged Philip to go on with the great work of the Polish College, and to set

[1] See the manuscript preserved in the archives of the Congregation of Naples, under the title: *Vita S. Philippi Nerii secundum tempora descripta.*

it, if possible, on a solid and permanent foundation. From the letters written by the Roman fathers to the fathers of Naples it is evident that this was to them the great object of interest from 1583 to 1587. It is continually spoken of, the difficulties attending it are discussed, and we see that very great efforts were made to provide the large sum of money required. F. Tommaso Bozio, who seems to have been rector of the college, writes as follows to F. Talpa on the 2d May 1586: "We saw that Signor Virgilio had made up his mind to give nothing more to the Polish undertaking until the coming of the Cardinals. As I could not fall back on Piermaria, I took advantage of an occasion furnished me by Providence to meet the expenses of the work. As the Alciati had put themselves into my hands, and were very docile and obedient in everything, I resolved to receive them into the college, at the earnest request of Mgr. Cusano. . . . I am thinking of introducing among these young men the Oratory exercises we have on the mornings of feasts."

Bozio was thus, in all probability, the Rector of the Polish College; but this office had been assigned by S. Philip to F. Talpa until his departure for Naples. It was Talpa who drew up the Rule of the College, a copy of which, written with his own hand, now lies before me; it is preceded by a preface in which are set forth the motives which induced Philip to undertake so great a work. When it was known in Poland that Gregory XIII. had founded colleges in Rome for the education of young men belonging to countries which had been overrun by heresy, many young Poles came to Rome with the intention of entering one of these colleges. But their hopes were doomed to disappointment, because the newly-founded colleges were precluded by

their Rule from receiving any students other than those of their own nation. In their distress and perplexity Philip and his companions had compassion on them, and began to consider the possibility of founding a Polish College in Rome; and it is worthy of notice that they did not regard this work as alien from the spirit and aims of the Congregation. Philip revolved it in his mind; he weighed the difficulties of the undertaking and the motives which constrained him to venture upon it, trusting in God for guidance and help. To the students themselves, what an advantage to receive their education in the very centre of Christendom, and what immense good might be done not in Poland only, but in all the north of Europe, by pious and learned priests, fully equipped for their work. He remembered the fidelity of Poland to the Catholic faith for more than six hundred years, and its loyalty to the Holy See; he knew the piety of the reigning king, his personal valour, his learning, and his anxiety to raise up a body of men whose culture might reflect honour on the Catholic faith; and everything encouraged him to attempt the foundation of the Polish College. It would enjoy the protection of the Queen, whose piety and zeal were so conspicuous; the Senate of Poland and its admirable bishops would not fail to aid it; and Cardinal Jacopo Savelli, protector of the kingdom of Poland, and a devoted friend of our saint, urged him to undertake it. Philip then consulted the Pope, and obtained his approbation; the college was resolved on and begun, and he left nothing undone to ensure its continuance and prosperity.

F. Talpa divided the rule into four parts:—of piety, of discipline, of studies, of divine worship. It bears throughout that impress of gentleness and humility, by

which we recognize the works of our saint. The students entered the college at the age of twenty-two, and went through a course of theological study; and especial attention was given to canon law, which had fallen into utter neglect in Poland. They were formed to habits of piety and virtue, and imbued with that humble, gentle, and cheerful spirit which S. Philip regarded as the life and strength of the Catholic priesthood, and as more especially needed by those who were to live and labour amongst heretics.

In his anxiety to secure a permanent foundation for the college, Philip strove to induce the Polish government to recognize it as their own, and to supply the funds required for its support; and for this purpose he made use of F. Giovenale Ancina. It is true that F. Talpa had received a letter from the Queen Anna, in which the college and its rector were spoken of in terms of warmest commendation; but Philip wanted to obtain from Poland something more than praise. F. Ancina was not unknown to King Stephen Batthori; he had sent him a drawing of the famous column of Trajan, together with a poem of his own, in which our Divine Lord was set forth as the foundation and column of the Church, and Stephen was exhorted to persevere in a life of christian piety. The king, who was both pious and well instructed, received these gifts with singular pleasure, and ever after regarded Ancina as a friend. Not long after this, Andrea Batthori, the king's nephew, was sent to Rome as ambassador, and attached himself to Ancina as his father and master. Ancina strove to lead him on to a truly spiritual life, and with such success that S. Charles Borromeo could not refrain from thanking and congratulating him. Andrea was in due time created a cardinal, and being King

Stephen's nephew and ambassador, he seemed to Philip the instrument of God for the attainment of the object he had so much at heart. F. Giovenale obeyed with ardour the directions of his beloved father, but without any practical result. We read in a letter from Bozio to Father Talpa, in 1586: "The promises of these Polish lords do not turn out worth much. When the undertaking was recommended to the care and protection of Cardinal Batthori he said a few discouraging words, and nothing has been done as yet." On the other hand, we see from a letter of the Cardinal, written subsequently to Bozio's, that he really had Philip's undertaking much at heart, and promised that on his return to Poland he would use every effort to procure the recognition and endowment of the college.

The Cardinal was in Poland in 1587, and wrote to F. Giovenale Ancina in these terms: "I am living quietly at home, awaiting the commands of the most serene king my uncle, as to the time and manner of his granting me an audience; and I assure your Paternity that when I am in his presence I will not fail to speak in the warmest terms of all your affection for me, and to urge on him the endowment of the college in Rome for Poles, as your Paternity has so earnestly charged me to do. I will also use what influence I have with the high officials and prelates of the kingdom, to induce them to favour and support this worthy undertaking . . . 4th Nov. 1587." At this crisis King Stephen died, and the choice of his successor so preoccupied the minds of the Poles that their college in Rome could not be spoken of. There are reasons for believing that Philip made a further attempt on behalf of the college on the election of King Sigismund, but without

success. We find that, although our saint did not allow the younger fathers to travel much, he either commanded or allowed F. Bordini to accompany Cardinal Aldobrandini (Clement VIII.) when he went to Poland as Legate of the Holy See. The election of a king had led to a disastrous civil war between the partisans of Sigismund of Switzerland and those of Maximilian of Austria, each of whom had been chosen king by a certain number of the electors, and Sixtus V. interposed as mediator. When the war was over, and Sigismund was left in quiet possession of the throne, it is most probable that F. Bordini availed himself of that opportunity of furthering the interests of the Polish college in Rome. But though the king was a man of great piety and a zealous defender of the faith, we cannot find that he did anything for the college; and it is not improbable, that there were in the Polish constitution and customs insuperable difficulties in regard of its endowment. And thus the work languished after a few years, and failed for want of support; and Philip consoled himself with the fruit he had been permitted to gather, and with the conviction that God no longer required that work of him.

Our saint embraced in his congregation the idea of the Catholic priesthood in its fulness, and therefore the education of youth in learning and in virtue was never alien from its scope. Among the manuscripts of the Vallicella Library we find a copy of the report believed to have been presented by S. Philip to Pope Gregory XIII. at the apostolical visitation of 1576, but known with certainty to have been drawn up in his lifetime. And in this report we read that, amongst the other works of the fathers of the Oratory: "Some boys of noble family are educated by our priests, and give proof

of great instruction and religion. Our *Collegio* receives also other boys who, though poor, are of good character and abilities; so that more than fifty boys dwell here with us."[1]

[1] The original is in the archives of Castel S. Angelo, xvii. Ord. 4.

CHAPTER XV.

GREGORY XIV.—THE CARDINALATE—PHILIP'S ILLNESS —DEATH OF F. GIGLI—F. CONSOLINI—PHILIP'S COURAGE AND MIRACLES.

Sixtus V. died on the 27th August 1590. We have no means of knowing what judgment Philip passed on that pontificate, at once so stern and so grand. Two fathers of the Vallicella, Bordini and Tommaso Bozio, celebrated in Latin verse the marvels of the reign of Pope Sixtus, and we may hence conclude that although our saint was so unlike the deceased Pope in character and disposition, he was not insensible to the grandeur and energy of his rule.

Philip had just completed the seventy-fifth year of his life; five more remained to him—years of singular beauty and value. His progress is more sensibly rapid as he draws nearer the end; and we note this not only in the loftier heights of contemplation which united him directly to God, but in the fervour of charity by which he drew nearer to God in the service of His creatures. His advanced age and his frequent infirmities abated neither his love nor his zeal; he was still young in mind and heart, for the ever more abundant grace which came down upon his soul, as a fountain of living waters, *renewed his youth like the eagle's.* Let us then approach the study of this last and surpassingly beautiful stage of our saint's life with deeper attention and more reverent love.

Those who were admitted to Philip's room during the pontificate of Sixtus V. would have often seen, amongst other members of the Sacred College who loved to gather around him, the Cardinal of Cremona, Niccolò Sfrondato. He was a Milanese by birth, a man of great learning and angelic purity of life. In his early years, which were passed in Lombardy, he applied himself to study and imitate the virtues of S. Charles Borromeo; and now in his old age he took exceeding delight in conversation with Philip. He loved our saint with the most tender affection, and was greatly beloved by him in return. Philip was so deeply impressed with the rare virtue of his friend that he felt quite sure he would one day be Pope, and he often intimated to the Cardinal this conviction in his own playful way. One day, for instance, several friends were conversing with him in his room, and among them were the Cardinal of Cremona and Marcello Vitelleschi. All at once Philip turned to Vitelleschi and said: "Open that cupboard, and give me the relic you will see there; I mean the berretta of Pius V." When it was given him he put it on the Cardinal's head as if he were trying whether it would fit, and said laughingly: "There now, just try it, and see how well you look in it." The Cardinal was accustomed to the saint's way of hiding his great supernatural gifts behind a veil of pleasant fancies and conceits, and therefore regarded these words as spoken in jest, and thought no more of them. After the death of Sixtus V. and before the election of his successor Urban VII., Cardinal Sfrondato came one day to see Father Philip at the Vallicella. When Philip was told of his visit he sent him down word that he was not to come upstairs, but to wait for him in the guest-room. When the saint went down he found in the guest-room not only

Cardinal Sfrondato, but several others, amongst whom were Pietro Paolo Crescenzi, afterwards Cardinal, the abbate Giacomo his brother, and Marcello Vitelleschi. On entering the room, his first words were these : "I command you all to kneel and kiss the feet of the Cardinal of Cremona." Accustomed as they were to do whatever the saint bade them do, they at once obeyed, and doubtless felt the hidden meaning of this strange command. But still the Cardinal, as we may infer from what took place after he became Pope, regarded this as only another of Philip's playful jests, and thought no more of it. Two or three days later the Cardinal came, as was his wont, to the Church of the Vallicella, and when Francesco della Molara told Philip of his arrival, the saint answered: "ah, that Pope, eh ?" and said no more.

We may imagine that when, a few days after this, Cardinal Giambattista Castagna was elected Pope and took the name of Urban VII., it was thought by those around our saint that his words and acts expressed a wish rather than a prophecy, and that he was wrong for once in saying who would be the Pope. But Urban VII. lived only twelve days, and died without having been crowned; a new conclave was assembled, and after much discussion and many difficulties, Cardinal Sfrondato was elected Pope, and took the name of Gregory XIV. The unaffected humility of the Cardinal had not allowed him to suspect that the choice of the Sacred College could fall on him, and the first words he uttered as Pope were not unworthy of the friend of S. Philip; "God forgive you," he said to the Cardinals; "what have you done ?"[1]

[1] Muratori, whom no one will suspect of wishing to flatter a Pope, says of Gregory XIV. : "A man of truly masculine virtue and of rare

But while Gregory XIV. was unaffectedly saddened and confounded by his exaltation, Philip rejoiced in it greatly, and blessed God for it. When he went to offer his congratulations to the new Pontiff, and was about to prostrate himself at his feet, Gregory forgot for the moment his high dignity, advanced to meet his old friend, and embraced him with affectionate tenderness. Nor was this all. He knew well that there was no one who could reflect more honour on the sacred purple than Philip, and therefore he took the red berretta which he had himself worn as Cardinal, put it on the saint's head, and said to him: "We create you Cardinal;" and turning to his secretary bade him prepare the customary brief. Philip replied by whispering a few words into the ear of the Pope; it was never known what they were, but the Pope no longer insisted on his accepting the proffered dignity. Philip then pretended to treat the matter as a mere pleasantry on the part of the Pope, and soon took his leave. But Gregory hoped still to overcome our saint's repugnance, and a few days later sent the cardinal's berretta to the Vallicella, with a message to the effect that he thus meant to create him Cardinal. Philip listened to the message and replied: "Tell the Pope, I pray you, that I thank him from my heart; and that I will myself let him know when I wish to accept the dignity of Cardinal." Gregory felt the deep meaning of this playful answer, and saw that it was better not to sadden Philip's old age with the burden of a dignity so distasteful to him, and which could really add nothing to his greatness. But he often talked to those around him of his wish to see

learning, blameless in life, of profound humility, and without the least thought of the sacred tiara."—*Annali*, Ann. 1590.

Philip a cardinal, and added that he had taken this unusual way with him advisedly, in hope that he might thus more easily extort his acceptance of the sacred purple.

In his refusal of the Cardinalate our beloved saint displayed his wonted wisdom and prudence, no less than his humility. At his advanced age it would have rather dimmed than heightened the splendour of his life, to cast on it the shadow of any greatness of earth. The marvel of his life lay precisely in this, that his unbounded influence and power were derived, not from rank, or any visible semblance of authority, but only from the energy of the love of God within him. That sublime dignity might be to others an immense increase of power for good; but Philip had a power greater far than any dignity could confer, a love of God so vehement and impetuous that nothing could resist it. And then, Philip's life was exquisitely harmonious, throughout in keeping with itself. He did not blame others for accepting ecclesiastical dignities, but he had always steadily refused to accept them himself. He had refused canonries and bishoprics in time past, and now he refused the honours of the Sacred College.[1] However earnestly Gregory XIV. desired to see Philip a cardinal, he felt no displeasure at his refusal, for he well knew our saint's humility. In a letter written soon afterwards to Tarugi by F. Germanico Fedeli we find an incident which shows the affectionate familiarity with which the Pope treated him: "5th January 1591.

[1] All the biographers of our saint mention these refusals in general terms; they did not deem it necessary or expedient to speak particularly of them. Bacci, indeed, mentions that Gregory XIII. offered him a canonry in S. Peter's; and that Philip refused it by saying in his usual playful manner that he did not quite know how to wear a canon's robes.

— On New Year's Eve His Holiness sent to ask F. Philip to give him that S. Gregory we used to have over the altar; he wished to have it because he had taken the name of Gregory out of devotion to that great saint. So, in the evening after Vespers, F. Philip sent it by F. Cesare Baronio, and the Pope received it with singular delight, and said with a smile that he did not mean to be very grateful to F. Philip for the picture, because he had waited to be asked for it. He keeps it hung up in his own room and shows it to everybody, for it is indeed very beautiful."

At the moment when Pope Gregory offered Philip the sublime dignity of Cardinal, our saint was withdrawing himself into a life more retired and contemplative than he had hitherto led. He asked and obtained permission from the Pope to say mass in a small chapel adjoining his room. We have already seen with what devotion and reverence he had celebrated the sacred mysteries of the Eucharist, from the very beginning of his priesthood. But now, in his seventy-sixth year, he could no longer restrain the impetuosity of divine love which glowed within his heart, and he resolved to say mass in private, that he might give free course to his devotion. And from that time his usual method of saying mass was this: up to the *Agnus Dei*, or, as Gallonio says, to the *Domine, non sum dignus,* everything went on as before; but at the solemn moment which precedes the priest's communion, those who were in the chapel withdrew, the server lighted a lamp, put out the altar candles, closed the shutters of the windows, locked both doors, and left the saint alone with God. Philip would have none to witness the raptures of his love, or to check the freedom of his sighs and words and tears. A

notice was then hung on the door, with these words: "silence—the Father is saying mass." He would remain alone with Jesus in the adorable sacrament for two hours, hours of contemplation, and of prayer with many tears, and urgent intercession for the Holy Church, the Bride of Jesus Christ, that He would render it as holy in the life of its children as it is in its faith and teaching.[1] After two hours the server came back and knocked gently at the door; if the saint answered, he opened the door, relighted the candles on the altar and opened the window-shutters, and Philip finished his mass in the usual way. If the server received no answer, he went away for some time longer, nor did he enter the chapel until the saint gave some sign that he might do so. What passed in those hours is known to God alone; those who saw Philip when his mass was over were struck with amazement and awe, and his countenance was pale and wasted, as of one about to die.

And yet, in his great humility, Philip eagerly asked the prayers of others. In this very year he wrote thus to the Blessed Giovenale Ancina: "It gives me the greatest joy that you remember me in the holy Sacrifice, for this is a mighty means of entreating our Almighty Father to grant us His grace and mercy, whereof we stand so much in need, by reason of the emptiness and worthlessness of all we do, if it rest not on that foundation; and, if you will continue your good and holy practice, my joy and satisfaction will be the greater, and I send you now my thanks beforehand. As the ship which is in deep water cuts its way more securely along, even so I am persuaded that, being aided by the masses and prayers of many persons, I shall more safely

[1] Gallonio, lib. ii. cap. 89. Bacci, lib. ii. cap. 1.

and more readily reach the haven of everlasting life when it shall please the Lord to call me hence."

Besides this change in his way of saying mass, Philip's whole life became more still and recollected and meditative. He now seldom left the house except to visit the sick, many of whom he miraculously healed. Still the holy Pope, Gregory XIV., desired to see him often, and Philip never failed to go when summoned. This intimacy between the Pope and Philip is worthy of especial notice, and reflects honour on them both. Philip's visits were looked for with eager delight by the Pope; he would embrace him most tenderly, make him sit down at his side and keep his head covered, and treat him in every way as a valued and beloved friend. He would never allow Philip to perform towards him the outward acts of reverence then in use, nor kneel to kiss his foot. On one occasion he threw his arms round the saint's neck to prevent his doing so, and said to him: "O my father, you are assuredly far above us in holiness, though we are above you in dignity." Amidst the troubles and anxieties of his brief pontificate he often consulted Philip on the gravest matters connected with the Church. Though these matters were mostly political, Gregory never failed to take counsel on them with men of God, and especially with Philip. Nor is this wonderful, for the Pope himself began his day with an hour of meditation and prayer.[1]

An indication of the great influence which Philip exercised over the mind of Pope Gregory is given by a letter to our saint from his friend and disciple, Teo da Siena. This letter is further interesting as showing

[1] Ciacconio writes of Gregory XIV.: "Rerum cœlestium contemplationi deditus cui ad primam lucem unius horæ spatium vacare solebat; Sancti Bernardi lectione mire delectabatur."

what esteem was felt for Philip in his native city, and by the Grand Duke Cosimo in particular. Teo writes to tell the saint that the nuns of a certain convent in Siena had been driven by extreme want, during the famine, to admit amongst them some young girls without the bishop's consent; that the bishop had taken no notice of this irregularity for some time, but now threatened the nuns with excommunication unless these girls were sent away, and that the whole city was in commotion about it. He then adds: "The Grand Duke our lord, when I had occasion to see him lately in Florence, told me that he was exceedingly displeased with the bishop; he said that, however irregularly these young girls had obtained the habit of religion, they could not now be sent away without grave injury to themselves, and great dishonour and wrong to their families. He said further, that the religious themselves would be utterly ruined, if they were compelled, in their extreme penury, to find money to pay back all the dowry they had received with these girls; that all this money had been spent in the terrible famine of the year just past, so that they would have very great difficulty in getting through this year. . . . On these accounts, his most Serene Highness bade me again and again write to your Paternity in his name, and tell you that he would regard it as a singularly great favour if you would intercede with the Pope, or any other personage with whom the matter may lie, that the fault of these nuns may be passed over with indulgence this once, *pro hac vice tantum*. . . . I promised that I would write to your Paternity, and thereupon the Grand Duke again repeated that I should tell you that I wrote in his name and on his behalf. For myself, I think that you will do a very great act of charity to many persons, and one which

will free our city from great difficulties and troubles; and I know that the Grand Duke will be, on many accounts, very much pleased."[1] And two years later, Teo writes: "Health in the Lord. The tender and abiding memory I cherish of your Paternity will not allow me to be longer silent. I have taken care that the Grand Duke should receive the courteous messages you sent him, and I know he will hold them dear, for he has many times charged me to greet your Reverence in his name."[2]

Pope Gregory XIV. delighted to manifest in every way his love of Philip, and his affectionate interest in the welfare of his congregation. It was now five years since the Oratory had been begun in Naples, and it had prospered greatly; but it had not as yet been regularly approved and founded by the authority of the Holy See. On the 29th August 1591, Gregory XIV., at Philip's request, issued a Bull by which the Congregation of Naples was canonically erected and constituted. And as the Pope knew that the congregation was straitened for room, he granted them by the same Bull the parish church of S. Giorgitello, with its furniture, house, and garden, and also the adjoining church of SS. Cosmas and Damian with its garden and house. Both these churches belonged to an abbey in the free gift of the Pope, and the donation made of them to the Oratory was therefore unassailable in law; but the priests and some of the *beneficiati* of both churches allowed themselves to be wrought upon by certain persons who envied the prosperity of the Oratory, and contested its validity. After many

[1] Letter to S. Philip from Teo da Siena, 22d September 1591, in the Vallicella Library.

[2] This letter is preserved in the Vallicella Library; its date is 18th July 1593.

vexatious delays judgment was given against them, and the munificent gift bestowed by Pope Gregory XIV. on the congregation of Naples for the love he bore to Philip, enabled the fathers to raise the stately church we now see.

Not long after the election of Gregory XIV., our saint fell into one of those illnesses which had now become so frequent. Gallonio, who was an eye-witness, says only that it was a fever, that the illness was long and very serious, and that the saint was quite suddenly restored to health again. Although Philip was an example of serenity and patience in all his illnesses, Gallonio remarks that on this occasion, while he was suffering from a burning fever, he smiled and jested with his wonted tranquillity of mind, and that those who beheld only the peace and the cheerfulness of his countenance would have thought him in perfect health. Gallonio relates a striking and characteristic incident of this illness. One day there was brought him, by the physician's order, a glass of a certain beverage which he much liked. But when he took it into his hand to drink he burst into tears, and said in a voice tremulous with emotion: "Thou, O Christ—there upon the cross—and I here in bed, with so many comforts, so many alleviations, and waited on by so many who stand around me!" And while he was saying these and other like words, he wept bitterly, as though he could not restrain himself for grief.

Although Philip recovered from this illness it left its traces on his constitution, and his health was never again what it had been. For the four remaining years of his life we find him spoken of as sometimes better and sometimes worse, while from time to time he either was or seemed to be in perfect health. His ailments

and infirmities, which, though not in themselves grave, were perpetually recurring, and his advanced age, were sources of anxiety to all those who loved him; and the fathers of his congregation who loved him so tenderly lived in constant apprehension; they prayed, and they entreated all whom they knew, to pray that God would lengthen out the days of the father so universally beloved. Their letters to the fathers of Naples are full of details about the saint's health, and bear witness to their anxiety no less than to their affection. In a letter written on the 21st December 1590, we read: "our reverend Father Philip continues in his state of convalescence and weakness. He gets up, and walks a little up and down his room, but he cannot come down stairs either to say mass or hear confessions. The cold weather and his old age try him much; and so it will be well that you should go on praying." On the 5th January 1591, after saying that the Father was better, and had been able to say mass in the church, the writer adds: "What he feels most now is a weakness of stomach, so that he has no appetite, and the little he does eat he cannot digest. If the weather should become milder as we draw nearer to spring, he will soon regain strength; but as long as the cold lasts, we must be satisfied if he continues as he is." On the 25th January, there was evidently a relapse, for Bozio writes to F. Talpa: "our Father Philip is obliged to keep his bed; he has a fever which, though slight and intermittent, causes us to feel very uneasy, and to dread something more serious, which may God in His mercy avert from us! He feels the return of cold weather and the inclemency of the season the more, because he is so thin, and worn, and wasted; so that you must not only continue praying, but pray with more fervour." On

the 1st of February, there was again an amendment, and Bozio writes to Tarugi: "The health of our Father goes on improving slowly. He rises and sits up a good part of the day, but he is still very weak and languid. He has not strength to stand the cold of this extraordinary season, and the rain and sleet we have had for some days make him keep his room." And on the 7th February, we read in another letter: "our Father continues well, but there is still a little weakness and want of appetite."

In saying the divine office, as in saying mass, Philip's fervour was so great, that at the very first words he became quite abstracted from the world and rapt in God, and hence the recitation of the Breviary often left him quite exhausted. On this account Pope Gregory sent him a dispensation from the obligation of saying office, and bade him say the Rosary instead; but Philip would never avail himself of this dispensation unless his illness was so severe as to compel him to do so.

Shortly after Philip had recovered from his dangerous illness, it pleased God to call to Himself one of his earliest companions, F. Niccolò Gigli. He was the first father of the Oratory whose death is recorded, and the only one who had the blessedness of being assisted in his last moments by our beloved Father. In a short life of F. Gigli we read, that there was a tradition at the Vallicella, that while he was one day saying mass at the Torre di Specchi he had a supernatural revelation of his approaching end. On his return to the Vallicella, he told Philip of this warning from heaven, and began with great serenity and peace to prepare for death. The day after, early in the June of 1591, he was seized with a fever, which, as he had foretold,

brought him to the grave in fourteen days. Throughout his illness, Philip waited continually on this his dear companion and disciple, served him with his own hands, and assisted him in every way with the love of a father and a friend. It is said that when Philip entered his room, his sufferings were relieved, and that they returned when the saint went away from him again. And it is recorded that one day he took Cardinal Frederic Borromeo to see F. Gigli, and commanded his dying son to give his blessing to that great Prince of the Church.

F. Gigli displayed the most edifying patience throughout his illness, and passed the few last days of his life in devout expressions of his love towards his Lord, keeping his eyes constantly fixed on a Crucifix which hung near. When the time came that he was to receive the holy Viaticum, he could no longer restrain his impetuous fervour. With his last remaining strength he cast himself from his bed on the floor, and on his knees adored the divine Sacrament, and welcomed his Lord and God with an abundance of tears, and most touching expressions of devotion. Philip was present, and checked this singularity of devotion, lest it should seem to savour of ostentation, by saying: "Leave off, leave off; be silent, be silent." The dying son understood at once the meaning of his blessed father's words, restrained his devotion as much as he could, and so received Holy Communion. As the end drew near, Philip, who was saying mass, obtained for him the victory in a last and violent conflict with the spirit of evil; and then standing at his side he asked him: "Niccolò, do you wish to get well?"—"Get well," said the dying man; "what for, father; what for?" And then, as if weary of the world and pining for rest, he

breathed out his soul in Philip's arms. Though our saint greatly loved F. Gigli, it was remarked that all that day he manifested an unwonted gladness of heart and fulness of interior joy, as though he knew that his beloved son was with his Lord. Yet Philip felt his loss and mourned him much. When the corpse was taken down into the church, he waited till the doors were closed, and then, thinking himself alone and unobserved by any one, he drew near to the blessed body, embraced and kissed it again and again, as if he could not cease from showing his veneration and love of it. What a heart was Philip's! how far stronger than death his love! Those who dream that the love of God weakens and destroys all human love would do well to glance at Philip's life. Well might F. Gigli exclaim, with his dying breath: "O my Father! how is it that I have not known thee hitherto? Now that I am dying I begin to learn what manner of man thou art!"

Gallonio, who had lived many years with Gigli, gives a sketch of his character in his life of S. Philip; and I quote his words, not only because they are beautiful, but because we may learn from the son what the father must have been: "Father Gigli was a great servant of God, and detached from all affections of earth. He was an ardent lover of obedience and the sworn enemy of ease; he confessed for hours all kinds of people, and never seemed to weary; he prayed much in due place and time, despised himself, was zealous in good works, fervent in the service of God, mortified and humble. He was on this account peculiarly dear to our blessed Father, who loved him with a cordial love. He was confessor of the nuns of the Tor di Specchi, which office he discharged with great sanctity and charity to the end. He lived twenty years in the

congregation, beloved by all for his great kindness of heart, and his singular fervour of spirit." Of him one saying is recorded which is of rare beauty and value. Philip had so mortified him in ways which smite to death all esteem of self, that one day he said to Gallonio: "Father, I have now no honour left; Father Philip has made me lose it all."

One great consolation which God had reserved for Philip's old age was the entrance into the congregation of the young Pietro Consolini of Monteleone in the diocese of Fermo. Pietro came to Rome in the pontificate of Sixtus V. in order to complete his studies; and an uncle of his, who was one of the priests of S. John of the Florentines, made him acquainted with the spiritual exercises of the Oratory. The first time that Philip saw him he said to him with a pleasant smile: "Courage, my son; you are one of us." The youth attached no importance to these words, but felt himself mysteriously drawn towards the saint, and very often went to see him. Philip, on his side, was charmed with the good natural disposition of Pietro, and with the purity of his life, and began to take an especial interest in him. He was at first a penitent of F. Angelo Velli and afterwards of Philip himself; and the manner of his reception into the Oratory was extraordinary and without precedent in our saint's life. Without speaking to the youth of his intention, but without doubt under the guidance of the Spirit of God, Philip proposed him to the fathers, and had him admitted into the congregation as a novice. Pietro was naturally surprised; but so great was his veneration for our saint that he at once asked and obtained his uncle's consent, and gave himself up entirely into Philip's hands.

This took place in 1590, when, as we have seen, Philip was beginning to live a more retired and contemplative life. Consolini's arrival was a blessing and a joy to the whole house. He became one of the brightest glories of the congregation, and it was his privilege to cheer and soothe by his loving care the closing years of our saint's life. Philip greatly needed some one who could be almost always with him and take care of him, and this the fathers of the Oratory had not time to do as they wished. Tarugi and Baronio, once his inseparable companions, were now otherwise employed, one at Naples, and the other absorbed in the composition of his Annals; and the other fathers were busy from morning to night in the work of their several ministries. And then, in old age the companionship of a sprightly and affectionate youth has in it something soothing and invigorating, like the grafting a young shoot on an old stock. No sooner had Pietro entered the congregation than he devoted himself unreservedly to the care of Philip. He soon became the Benjamin, the son of the saint's old age, its staff and consolation. He was almost continually in Philip's room, recited the divine office with him, trimmed his lamp and kept his room in order, and rendered him every service he needed. When Philip went out, Consolini gave him his arm for support; before he said Mass, he read him some fable or other amusing story, to distract him from that too absorbing fervour which took him out of himself, and prevented his duly celebrating the divine mysteries. And thus it came to pass, that by degrees and quite unconsciously Philip opened his heart to this beloved and favoured youth more than he had ever done to others; or rather words escaped him from time to time in this loving inter-

course, which Pietro treasured and put together, and thus came to know many of the great and hidden gifts our saint received from heaven. Thus, to him and to Cardinal Federigo Borromeo alone, did Philip ever relate the circumstances of the miraculous dilatation of his heart in the catacombs; and Pietro guarded with a jealous and almost excessive reserve the mysteries confided to him by the saint. Long after Philip's death nothing was more difficult than to get him to speak of the wonders he had seen and heard during the years of his attendance on him.

Philip availed himself of these five years of unusual intimacy to lead Pietro to a high and singularly rare perfection; few of those who lived for thirty or forty years with him made such progress in his school. Few details are left us of the means which Philip used to form in five short years a soul of such transcending and amazing perfection. They were those, doubtless, which he used with others; and the happy natural dispositions of the youth, together with his close and constant intercourse with a saint like Philip, made him *perfect in a short space*, as though he had *fulfilled a long time*. Philip lavished on him an unbounded affection, so that he was called in Rome the disciple whom Philip loved. And hence there is something almost incredible in the continual mortifications by which the saint strove to destroy in Pietro's soul every vestige of that pride which dwarfs and stunts it, and clips the wings wherewith it should soar towards God. To an ordinary judgment it is hard to see how Philip could so tenderly love this gracious youth, and yet take such pains to make him appear at times ignorant, ridiculous, and ungrateful. But the reason of this seeming contradiction is ever the same; we degrade ourselves and go away far from

God by our pride in knowledge, in the esteem and praise of men; and only he who mortifies and prunes to the quick the luxuriance of this self-love is capable of true grandeur of soul.

Of the countless mortifications with which our saint exercised Consolini we will mention only two, one belonging to his youthful days, and the other to the first year of his priesthood. While Pietro was a young cleric he appears to have held some benefice which obliged him to present himself to the Pope for examination. Philip at once caught at this as an excellent opportunity of mortifying his much-loved disciple; and he bade him tell the Pope when he appeared before him that he was a man of education, and that there was no need to examine persons such as he was. Those who know the heart of man will see at once how keen a humiliation it was for a youth of gentle nurture to affect in the presence of the Pope this insolent pride of knowledge. Consolini obeyed with humble simplicity; but the Pope knew Philip well, and his spiritual school, and so gave the obedient disciple his blessing with a smile, and dismissed him without examination.

One day during the carnival, Consolini, then a young priest, was busy in his room, preparing a sermon for the evening. All at once Philip came in and told him that he dispensed him from preaching that evening, and that, instead of making a sermon, he was to write a *lunario*, that is, a comic almanack, with stories and jests and burlesque verses and prognostications, arranged according to the changes of the moon. Consolini obeyed at once without a word, and set to work on his ungenial task. Meanwhile the time for the sermon came, and no preacher made his appearance. Thereupon F. Agostino Manni, then prefect of Sermons, ran up to tell Conso-

lini to be quick, for that the people were waiting; and he added, that he ought to have remembered that it was his turn to preach, and so on. To this reprimand Consolini answered only: "Father Philip has given me something else to do, and I am obeying his command." On hearing this, Manni ran hastily to the Father's room, and told him of the scandal given by the absence of the preacher, and asked, with some very natural astonishment, what was the reason of it. Philip was not sorry to have an opportunity of inflicting a slight mortification on F. Manni too, so he gave him a good scolding, and said, nodding his head as he spoke: "What do you mean by preaching at the Oratory? What preaching? I am quite surprised that you should venture to disturb that good young Consolini, who is doing something of very great importance. Get you gone, and let him alone; what he is doing is of greater moment than the sermon you are talking of." We can easily imagine the confusion and discomfiture of poor F. Manni; but he, too, was a disciple in Philip's school, and so he shrugged his shoulders, and ran down to preach the sermon himself. In the evening, at recreation, the famous *lunario* was read out, by Philip's command, in presence of several Cardinals; and it amused them so much that they took it away with them and read it to the Pope, that he might have, as the memoirs of the time tell us with great simplicity, some little mirthful recreation amidst the troubles and anxieties of his high office. And thus Philip trained his young disciple to obedience, to contempt of himself, to patience and humility, and bequeathed to the congregation a living exemplar of every virtue.

Consolini survived his father and master forty years, and was never absent from the Vallicella even for a

single day. In him the memory of our saint lived on in all its freshness; he knew the secrets of his heart and reflected his image in his life. The impress of his father was stamped on him if not more deeply yet more visibly than on any other, and God lengthened out his days, that another generation might learn from him the spirit of S. Philip. He was master of novices for forty years, and thus formed more than one generation of Oratorians upon the pattern of Philip's charity and sweetness and zeal, and, above all, of his humility. While we see in this great and saintly son of S. Philip the likeness of his father's every virtue, there are two which shine out with peculiar lustre: Philip's love of the congregation, and his humility. All his efforts were directed to uphold the Oratory, and to guard against the slightest deviation from the path traced out for it by the Holy Father. He reflects the humility of the saint in every action of his long life; he puts it at the head of the Oratorian Rule, which was written by him; and as master of novices and Superior of the congregation he inculcated it with unwearying persistence and with marvellous effect. It may almost seem that Consolini's humility verged on excess, especially in his conduct in regard of S. Philip. That he loved Philip with a boundless love none can doubt; yet when the saint's canonization was going on, he would not allow the fathers of the Oratory to move in it, nor would he give his own evidence in the processes but under obedience, and even then briefly and with great reserve. When he was afterwards asked how it was that he, devoted to S. Philip as he was known to be, should have rather hindered than furthered his canonization, his reply was: "I felt sure that I could never displease Philip by excess of humility; and as

to his canonization, I do not hesitate to say that even if you had taken no human means to bring it about, God Himself would have taken care to exalt His faithful servant, for His own greater glory."

Notwithstanding the exceeding gentleness of Philip's disposition he did not lack on occasion that decision and courage which always accompany true greatness. We meet with an instance of this in 1591, which is rendered more striking by its occurring when he was seventy-six years old. A lady of advanced years, of illustrious birth, and a penitent of Philip's, was dangerously ill; and as she was expected to die, Philip visited her frequently for the good of her soul, although his weakness made it difficult for him to do so. A nephew of this lady, a man of high position and great influence, took it into his head that his aunt thought of leaving all her money to the Oratory, and that Philip's visits had no other end than to encourage this intention. He thereupon sent Philip an angry message that he was not to visit his aunt again. He little knew with whom he had to do, for the saint took no notice whatever of the message, and continued his visits as before. When the nephew had tried in vain the effect of several threats, he gave strict orders to the servants that they were on no account to allow Philip to enter the house. But this, too, was in vain; for Philip's influence was strong enough to overcome every obstacle, and he continued to visit the sick lady every day. On this the nephew became violently angry, and things came to such a pass that the Fathers of the congregation entreated Philip not to visit the lady again, lest he should meet with insult and violence. But the saint answered quietly: "Do you not know that I go to see that sick person purely for the good of her soul? Well, I will

not give up going to see her, even though I were sure that they would kill me." The fathers then observed that there were times when it was expedient to yield to force, and that prudence was a virtue, and the like; but Philip replied that in this matter he would yield nothing, and that he should deem his giving way to threats and fears a weakness unworthy of a christian priest. "And after all," he added, "you may make yourselves easy; no one will kill me. The sick lady will soon be well again; it is the nephew who will die before long." And so it came to pass.

We may relate in this connexion another incident which occurred about this time, and which reveals to us the perfection of his meekness and patience. While the fathers of the congregation loved and venerated their Father and Master, our knowledge of human nature forbids us to suppose that his life was one of unruffled peace. He had his portion of the troubles and annoyances, the contradictions and the sorrows which are the lot of man in this dim pilgrimage of life, even amongst the good and holy. Gallonio contents himself with saying: "even in the congregation there were not wanting some who looked on Philip as a rude and simple man, and treated him accordingly; but of this he took no notice, and treated them with the same cordiality as the others." Bacci mentions one particular instance of this, which Gallonio could not have made known without revealing the person of the offender, who was still living, and so wounding his feelings needlessly. On one occasion, then, when an important matter regarding the congregation was under discussion, a letter on the subject was presented to Philip as Superior; and while he was preparing to read it

aloud, one present, thinking that the letter contained something he did not want to be known, snatched it insolently from his hand, saying that there was no use in reading it. Philip took the affront with such incomparable meekness that he did not betray the slightest emotion, nor did he allude to it for a very long time, when he charged F. Germanico Fedeli to admonish the offender charitably after his death, in order that he might acknowledge his fault and do penance for it, and thus obtain pardon from God.

The pontificate of Gregory XIV., which had given rise to so many hopes, was short and full of trouble. The Pope's constitution had never been strong, and he died in his fifty-fifth year, after a reign of only ten months and a few days. His pontificate was saddened by the renewed insolence of the brigands whom Sixtus V. had repressed, by the civil war raging in France, and by a terrible famine in Italy, during which multitudes died of hunger. After the famine there followed a malignant pestilence ; and it is said that sixty thousand persons died in Rome alone. The Pope exerted himself to alleviate these fearful evils, and we may feel sure that Philip displayed his wonted charity ; but the only notice we can find of this terrible time is contained in a letter of F. Germanico Fedeli, written on the 7th February 1591. He writes : " our Father Philip is profoundly grieved by the misery and want caused by this famine, and we cannot as yet see whether a sufficient remedy can be found."

The biographers of our saint tell us of many wonders done by him during this pontificate. Thus Gallonio says that one day, when Philip had gone to visit two Dominicans who were ill, he foretold that the one whose illness was regarded as the more serious would

recover, and that the other in regard of whom no apprehension was felt would die; and as he had foretold so it came to pass. The most striking of these miracles is recorded as follows: a lady of one of the principal families of Rome was seriously ill, and Philip very frequently went to see her. After a month of great suffering she was lying in her agony, and evidently much exercised with violent interior temptations; and Philip remained with her for some time to console her and prepare her for death. He then went away, intending to return to the Vallicella, but after a few steps he said to his companion: "I feel inwardly moved to go back again to that dying lady." He found her in the same state both of mind and body, and saw that she might linger on still for some hours, and even to the following day. He thereupon sent out of the room some of the ladies present, breathed once or twice on the face of the sufferer, and prayed for her with unusual fervour, and comforted her with words of loving sympathy; and then, seeing that the interior struggle still went on, he looked at her fixedly, laid his hands on her head, and said in a loud voice, which was heard by many persons: "Soul, I command thee in the Name of God, go forth from this body," and immediately the sufferer peacefully expired. He then said to those who were present that he knew that if the lady had lingered long in that state she was in peril of sinking in her struggle with temptation, and that he had therefore asked and obtained of God that her agony should be shortened for her soul's good.

Among the many in whose hearts Philip, while still living in the world, awakened the sense of a higher life, was Giovanni Manzoli, a Florentine and a wealthy man, who lived in the warehouse of the Bonsignori in

Rome. In 1547, when Philip was only thirty-two years old, Manzoli became one of his followers; and though he remained in the world, never forsook him entirely. On one occasion, we find that Philip cured him of the gout, and on another that he prophesied to him that he would live longer than Philip himself. But in the year 1591 it seemed as though the prophecy would fail, for Manzoli fell sick of a dangerous fever, and was given over by his physicians. After he had received Extreme Unction he entreated his nephew, with a failing and hardly audible voice, to let Philip know his desperate state, and ask him to pray for him, and to send one of the fathers of the Oratory to make the recommendation of his soul to God. His life was ebbing rapidly away, and while he was thinking of Philip and commending himself to his prayers, the memory of the long-forgotten prophecy came dimly back, but without reviving his hope of life. Soon the physicians came, and told him he had now but a few hours to live. Matteo Maffei, the priest sent by S. Philip, came and prayed with him and for him, as for one drawing very near to death. He sank lower and lower still, and one was heard to whisper to another among the bystanders: he is going now; now he is dying. Maffei returned to the blessed Philip, and told him that Manzoli was living still, but could not last much longer; but Philip, who felt a great affection for his old disciple, heard him with calm composure, and began to pray for Manzoli. That night, to the amazement of all, the sick man rallied visibly, and in the morning, when they were beginning to prepare for his funeral, he was considerably better. Meanwhile Francesco Zazzara entered Philip's room and said: "O my father, I have lost a dear friend of mine; Giovanni Manzoli died in the night, and the

fratelli have been sent for to bear his body to the grave." Philip had heard nothing of his friend since the previous evening, but he answered without hesitation: "believe me, Manzoli is not dead; and what is more, he will not die of this illness." A few minutes later came Maffei to tell Philip that he had just heard of Manzoli's death. "Why no," said the saint, "it is not so; he is still alive and is expecting you; go to him at once." Maffei was lingering as in hesitation, when Philip said with greater earnestness: "Do what I bid you; go at once and quickly; and be sure you see him with your own eyes." Maffei did not venture to delay longer, and on his arrival found the dying man in almost perfect health. While he was there the physicians came in, and declared that his recovery was undoubtedly a wonderful miracle. Manzoli died two years after our saint; he thus lived to add his testimony on oath to that of many other witnesses of his recovery.

On the death of Gregory XIV. the power of the keys of S. Peter passed into the hands of Innocent IX., an excellent pontiff, but who lived only two months after his election. During these two months Gallonio records some supernatural marvels of Philip's life, one of which is striking in its motive and effects. One night a penitent of the saint saw an appalling vision, as of some hideous animal bent on devouring him. The terror and the anguish lasted for some time, and then the vision disappeared, leaving him livid as with blows. In the morning he went to Philip and told him every circumstance of the vision. The saint listened and was silent for a time, as if in doubt whether he should speak or not; and at length replied: "Know, my son, that I was with thee in the night, and it was about

midnight thou hadst the fearful vision. I was with thee, and God sent it to thee on this and that account; I prayed Him to rouse thee by terrifying thee with visions; it is I who sent thee this to scare thee from thy sins." The vision had its effect.

CHAPTER XVI.

CLEMENT VIII. AND S. PHILIP—PROMOTION OF THE SAINT'S COMPANIONS—HIS SPIRIT SHOWN IN THEM.

WITHIN the space of little more than a year the Church had been thrice widowed of its supreme pastor. Urban, Gregory, and Innocent, each of whom had by his virtues filled the heart of Christendom with exultation and hope, passed quickly away by what seemed untimely death. It was an anxious time; the civil war which was desolating France might end in detaching that great kingdom from Catholic unity; and all christian hearts were longing and praying for a Pope whose vigour and address might guide the bark of Peter through the storm. God, in His mercy, heard the cries of His people; on the 30th January 1592, Cardinal Ippolito Aldobrandini was elected Pope, and was spared to rule the Church for thirteen years. Clement VIII. —he took this name on his election—was one of the greatest Popes the Church has ever had, and in every respect worthy and fitted to occupy the chair of Peter. He was pious and learned, laborious and indefatigable, and gifted with an admirable sagacity, prudence, and discretion. He was the last of the Popes whom Philip was destined to see. Our saint began his life in the brilliant but secular and somewhat profane pontificate of Leo X., and he ended it under the wise and holy and truly ecclesiastical rule of Clement VIII. A

thoughtful study of these two reigns gives us the measure of the advance the Church had made in the way of reform during the sixteenth century, an advance which Philip had done so much to further.

The relations between Clement VIII. and S. Philip strike us by their most cordial and affectionate intimacy, and stand out in strong relief on the history of this pontificate. It would seem as if, before calling him to Himself, God would give our saint some image and sense of the glory he had so constantly shunned, in honouring him with the affection and reverence of so great a Pope. Clement not only treated Philip with the greatest deference, and with the utmost tenderness of friendship, but he may be regarded as in a special sense his disciple. When he was a simple auditor of the Rota, under the pontificate of S. Pius V., he had been already for some time a penitent of our saint; and we know what it was for a pious, cultured, and earnest priest to be for more than thirty years Philip's penitent, and to live within the sphere of his attraction. The penitent inevitably became the disciple, and Aldobrandini was one of the most docile and proficient. While still auditor of the Rota he said, in a case in which Philip's name was mentioned: "Believe me, that father is quite a saint, and I feel sure that he will be one day canonized."

Nor did Clement limit his affection to Philip alone; he resolved to honour the Congregation of the Vallicella for his sake. He was the first Pope who succeeded in drawing the companions of the saint from their retirement, and set them up on high to give light to the universal Church. Previous Popes had expressed a wish to raise Tarugi, Baronio, and some others, to the episcopal dignity; but Philip's reluctance to deprive

the congregation of its ablest and most loved fathers had as yet rendered the wish ineffectual. But Clement had resolved to show, not only to the clergy of Rome, but to the whole Church of God, what he deemed the ideal of the christian priesthood, and the life best fitted to prepare men for those dignities which do not so much confer honour as exact sacrifices and impose a burden. And thus it was given to Philip, at the close of his long life, to see his work recognized, approved, and honoured by the Vicar of Christ on earth. Clement persisted in his resolve, notwithstanding the reluctance of those whom he wished to honour, and even of Philip himself. He allowed our saint, indeed, once more to refuse for himself the offer of the sacred purple, because he would not ruffle the serenity of his peaceful old age; but in regard of his companions the Pope was inflexible. Within a few years Bordini and the Blessed Giovenale Ancina were made bishops; Tarugi was created archbishop and cardinal; and Baronio became protonotary apostolic, cardinal, and librarian of Holy Church. He wanted further to raise F. Flaminio Ricci and others to the episcopal dignity, but he yielded to the reasons on which they rested their refusal, that the strength of the congregation would be too much impoverished and weakened by further losses.

The character of this great Pope, the disciple and friend of S. Philip, is one which excites our wonder while it attracts our love. In the ambassador's report to the Cardinal d'Este, quoted by Ranke, we are told that "he understands war as well as Julius II., embellishes Rome with as much taste as Sixtus V., and reforms Christendom with the spirit of Pius V.; and with all this his conversation is learned and full of

charm." Ranke also bears testimony to the zeal and unremitting application with which he applied himself to the government of the Church. Yet he fasted rigorously every Friday and Saturday, and daily received twelve poor men at his frugal table. On his elevation to the Papacy, Philip's humility led him to plead his age and infirmities as his excuse for ceasing to hear his confessions, and at the Pope's earnest request this office was assigned to Baronio; for every evening, when the labours of the day were over, the Pope sought the pardon of God in the sacrament of penance. On Sundays it was his delight to gather around him some religious, and especially the fathers of the Vallicella,[1] with whom he conversed of God, and of His truth.

One day during the pontificate of Gregory XIV. Cardinal Aldobrandini was in the garden of Curzio dei Massimi with several prelates and our S. Philip. Curzio drew Philip aside and said to him: "Father, I very much wish that you would get me into the service of Cardinal Aldobrandini." "Most willingly," answered our saint; "I can easily manage that; and, let me tell you, Aldobrandini will not die a cardinal." Subsequently, when the Holy See was vacant, and on the first day of the conclave, Philip told the abbate Maffa that Aldobrandini would be chosen Pope, and that he would take the name of Clement. That same evening Monsignor Papia sent Philip a sonnet, in which he urges him to pray that the Lord would give a pastor to His Church who would not die so soon as his predecessors. The saint returned answer in a sonnet of his own, in which he predicts who would be elected

[1] Ranke, History of the Popes, Book vi. § 5. Ciacconio, Vita Clementis VIII.

Pope, and the name he would take.[1] And it was generally believed in Rome that, at every vacancy of the Holy See, Philip prayed without ceasing that God would give a worthy pastor to His Church, and that the Lord heard his prayer, and enlightened his mind to know who that pastor would be.

When Cardinal Aldobrandini became Pope, he expressed a great desire to see Philip often, and, notwithstanding his age and his frequent sicknesses, the saint never failed to visit him. The Pope always received Philip with even greater demonstrations of affection and veneration than Gregory XIV. He would rise and advance to welcome him, and embrace and kiss him tenderly, and would never let the saint take his leave without kissing his hand; and, as was his wont, Philip would hide his confusion and repugnance with some jest. In the processes of the canonization, F. Agostino Buoncompagno, of the Oratory, deposes as follows, in reference to a visit he made to the Pope with Philip: "While I was kneeling at the feet of his Holiness, I saw and noted to my great wonder that the blessed Philip stood there with his berretta on his head, and quite at home and at his ease with his Holiness. He took the Pope's hand, and stroked his face and his beard, just as a father might caress a son; he would place his arm on the arm of his Holiness, and I noticed that the Pope received all these caresses of the blessed Philip with pleasure, and a countenance beaming with joy." On the saint's first visit, Clement said to him, in presence of Guiseppe Caladoro, Canon of S. John Lateran's: "Well, now you see you cannot escape being made a cardinal." But Philip answered with one of his usual jests and took leave very soon, lest the Holy

[1] Bacci, book iii. ch. vi., and Manfredi, *Miscellanee*, cap. 23.

Father should return to the subject, and insist too strongly on his acceptance of the proffered dignity. And the Pope did at first insist again and again, until he saw that he was only inflicting the keenest distress on the aged saint he loved so tenderly, and then he never spoke of it again. Many of Philip's friends, however, and even some members of the congregation, among whom Bernardino Corona, a lay brother, was the most urgent, pressed the saint to accept this high dignity for the good of the congregation, as they said. But Philip's heart was set on a dignity higher still, and, amidst all these entreaties, he remained immovable as a rock. Whenever the Cardinalate was spoken of, he would raise his eyes towards heaven, and say with impassioned fervour: *Paradiso, Paradiso.* Sometimes he would throw his berretta into the air while uttering these words, or play with an old cardinal's berretta he had by him, as though it were a ball. And hence this exclamation of our saint, so brief and yet so expressive, became enshrined in the hearts of his sons, and they have found strength to put aside the alluring vanities and ambitions of life in repeating the words: *Paradiso, Paradiso.*

Two written documents remain which show how intimate was the friendship between Clement VIII. and Philip, and the kindly playfulness with which they addressed each other; one of these is a request of Philip's to the Pope, in form of a genial pleasant letter, in which he contrives to insinuate even to a Pope a lesson of humility in his own characteristic way. In order to understand these letters we must premise that among the many in Rome who were devoted to our saint was a certain Claudio Neri, a Roman, learned in the law, but perplexed with many

scruples. Philip loved him much, and all his family. He had revealed to Claudio many of his most hidden scruples and feelings, and had won his perfect confidence and affection. Among Claudio's children was a good and pious girl called Maddalena, who wished to become a nun in a certain convent. To this her father strongly objected, as he wished Maddalena to enter the Tor di Specchi. Philip quite approved this wish of the father, and persuaded Maddalena to acquiesce in it; but there were found certain difficulties in the way of her admission to the Tor di Specchi which only the Pope could remove. Philip, thereupon, wrote a petition to the Pope, in form of a confidential letter, as follows: "*Beatissimo Padre*, and who am I that cardinals should stoop to come to see me, especially last evening the Cardinal of Florence and Cusano? And for that I had need of manna leaves, the said Cardinal of Florence brought me two ounces from the Santo Spirito, to which hospital the same lord Cardinal had that very day sent a large quantity. And that self-same day he tarried with me till full two hours after nightfall, and said much good of your Holiness—more, it seems to me, than he ought to have said, because you who are Pope ought to be humility itself. At seven hours after nightfall, Jesus came to give Himself to me and abide with me, and your Holiness takes care not once to come into our Church. Jesus Christ is Man and God, and He comes to visit me every time I will; and your Holiness is a simple man, born of the Lady Agnesina, a most holy woman doubtless, while He was born of the Virgin of all virgins. I should have much to say were I to give way to the anger I feel. I command your Holiness to do my bidding in the matter of a girl I wish

to put into the Tor di Specchi; she is the daughter of Claudio Neri, whose children your Holiness has promised to care for, and I must remind you that it beseems a Pope to keep his promise. Wherefore let your Holiness put this matter into my hands, so that I may use your name in case of need; the rather that I know the mind of the girl, and am sure she is moved by an inspiration from God. And with all befitting humility I kiss your most sacred feet." The Pope smiled as he read this quaint and playful petition, and at once wrote with his own hand and on the same sheet a few words in reply: "The Pope says that the first part of this petition breathes somewhat of an ambitious spirit, in that you tell him cardinals visit you so often; unless, indeed, you wish to let him know that these are spiritual men, which he knows right well already. As to his not going to see you, he says that your Reverence does not deserve it, since you will not accept the cardinalate so many times offered you. In regard of the *command*, he allows you to scold those good mothers with your wonted severity if they will not do what you wish; and in his turn he commands you to take care of yourself, and not to go back into the confessional without his leave; and that when next our Lord comes to see you, you pray for him, and for the pressing needs of Christendom." These letters need no comment. Maddalena was at once received into the Tor di Specchi, where she lived a holy life as Sister Eufrosina.

When Philip was prevented by sickness or other urgent cause from going to visit Clement he wrote to him in this simple loving way; but he never failed to go in person when he could, and the Pope received

him always with signs of great delight. During the whole of his pontificate Clement suffered much from gout in his feet and hands. On one occasion, Gallonio says in 1595, about Easter, his sufferings were so unusually great that he was ordered by the physicians to keep his bed. When Philip heard of this he felt a great desire to heal the Pope, whom he loved so tenderly; and he said to his friend Nero del Nero that the sickness of those who have great and important matters on their hands is felt by others as well as by themselves, and that therefore their healing was the more necessary. He therefore prayed for the Pope with great fervour, and then went off to visit him. When he came into the room Clement was in such pain that he could not even bear that any one should touch the bed he lay on, and he begged Philip not to come any nearer. Philip, however, moved gently forward until he was close by the side of the Pope, who, fearing that Philip might take his hand as he was wont to do, said to him: "Do not come any nearer, pray; and above all do not touch me." Philip replied, with a smile of affectionate sympathy: "I am not sorry for the gout, Holy Father, for that compels you to rest a little from your continual labours; but I am very sorry for the pain you suffer. Your Holiness need not fear; let me do as I please." And then, without another word, he seized the suffering hand, and pressed it closely with great affection and fervour of spirit, and with unusual trembling of his heart. The pain was gone, and Clement, who the moment before could not endure the slightest movement of his bed, cried out: "Go on touching me, Father, it gives me the greatest relief." The Pope was healed, and not only related this cure to Baronio, but

spoke of it as a miracle in presence of eight or ten cardinals of the congregation for examining bishops, and often adduced it in proof of Philip's sanctity. From that time forward, and even after the saint's death, whenever the Pope was suffering from gout he commended himself to Philip, and the pain was at once relieved.

Clement VIII. was not content with these private manifestations of the veneration in which he held Philip; he spoke often and earnestly of his sanctity to the cardinals and ambassadors of foreign powers, and to the strangers who came from time to time to Rome. He was one day giving audience to two Polish noblemen of great distinction, and amongst other things he spoke to them of Philip and his marvellous gifts, and his great sanctity, and urged them to pay a visit to the venerable saint. He said they could not but derive great edification from his holy and gentle words, and that they would bear back with them to Poland a joyous and consoling recollection of their visit. They thanked the Pope warmly, and were soon on their way to see Philip, expecting to find a man in no way like other men. Philip was in his little room when he was told that these two great personages were coming up the stairs, and he at once divined the motive of their visit; they wanted to see a saint, and hear him speak of things divine. He therefore ordered one of those about him to take up a certain book he had always in his room, full of fables and jests, and he bade him begin to read and not to leave off without a sign from him. The Polish nobles came in prepared to see a man of holy and devout aspect, and to their great surprise Philip turned towards them and said: "Please wait a moment till this fable is finished." And while the reading was

going on he said again and again: "You see I keep good books about me, and have matters of importance read to me." And he continued to talk in this strain as long as their visit lasted, without one word of God or of spiritual things. The nobles remained for some time, looking at each other in amazement, and then took their leave, completely bewildered. It is probable that they learned from the Pope, or from some one else, the meaning of this strange display, for by this time all Rome knew how Philip was wont to mortify himself. Anyhow, when they were gone, Philip stopped the reading and said, with an air of great satisfaction: "There, we have done all that was wanted for the present." He was now an old man, long exercised in humility and mortification, yet he dreaded lest some slightest mist of pride or vanity should dim the light of God within him. It is a lesson which should surely be to us a light, and strike us with a salutary fear.

Notwithstanding Clement's great affection for Philip, we find recorded in the memoirs of the time one instance in which the Pope refused a request of the saint. A bandit, connected by relationship with Tarugi, had been taken, tried, and condemned to death; Philip wished to obtain his pardon, and this the Pope refused to grant. It is an incident in their lives honourable to both. Philip's was a mission of mercy and of peace; but the Pope was the minister of public justice, the guardian of the lives and property of his subjects, and bound to repress the incursions of the brigands, who were now as numerous and as daring as ever. In a letter from F. Tommaso Bozio to the fathers of Naples, written on the 27th June 1592, we read: "Your reverences will learn from F. Germanico the particulars of the death of Signor Raffaele Tarugi, who was

beheaded yesterday at noon, notwithstanding our earnest intercession on his behalf, and although F. Philip went in person to implore the Pope to pardon him. The only thing that gives us any consolation is that Fathers Tommaso and Germanico ministered to him to the last, and that he gave very manifest signs of the marvellous grace vouchsafed to him in answer to our prayers."

Within a month of his election Clement VIII. began to manifest his resolve to make use of the fathers of the Oratory for the good of the universal Church. He acquiesced very reluctantly in Philip's refusal of the sacred purple, and then cast his eyes on F. Giovan Francesco Bordini, a man of great merit and of unusually great experience in public affairs. The Pope had long known him well, and had largely availed himself of his counsel and help when he went as Legate to Poland; he therefore selected him for the bishopric of Cavaillon.[1] The only person who was surprised at this promotion was Bordini himself, who, like a true disciple of S. Philip, felt the greatest repugnance to all ecclesiastical dignities. But both Baronio and Bordini had long been talked of as future bishops, for in a letter written in 1587 by F. Germanico Fedeli to Tarugi, we find these words: "The history (the Annals) is much sought after, and very warmly praised by those who read it, so that our F. Cesare will be very great and famous in the world; but we shall have to take care that they do not make a *reverendissimo* of him and send him to some far-off place. . . . And I fancy we had better look carefully how we can keep F. Giovan Francesco Bordini, who is very active and takes part in everything that is going on. Blessed are the ignorant, for they are safe sheltered from these perilous winds!" The promotion

[1] A suffragan see of Avignon.

of Bordini to the episcopate, followed as it was by some others, was naturally not pleasing to our saint. We are not told whether he supported by his influence and entreaties the refusal of Bordini to accept the proffered bishopric. In the case of Tarugi we know that his most pressing entreaties were of no avail with the Pope, and that he acquiesced at length in his elevation, either because he knew the great good his beloved disciple would do in a higher dignity, or because the Pope authoritatively bade him cease his opposition. We have seen what was Philip's repugnance to all ecclesiastical dignities, and the sacred terror with which he regarded them; let us now look at the bearing and conduct of his sons. Let us remember that they were secular priests restrained by no vow, no written rule as yet shaped their lives; they have simply been formed in S. Philip's school, and they reflect the spirit they had caught from him.

Philip felt a great affection for F. Bordini, and often employed him as his secretary; he had, therefore, trained him with peculiar care in mortification and humility. Who does not remember, for instance, the wedding feast of Gabriello da Cortona, when, by Philip's order, he joined Baronio and Tarugi in singing the *Miserere* by way of epithalamium? On the 5th May 1592 Bordini wrote to F. Talpa as follows: "I have certainly felt exceeding grief and sorrow of heart at having been raised to this rank of bishop, by reason of the loss of my own peace and quiet, and of my being taken from the congregation in bodily presence; as for my soul, that will always abide most intimately one with it, to procure for it every good and advantage, and to show it all affection. And since it has pleased God thus to dispose of me, and his Holiness has seen fit to lay on

me this great burden, I have submitted only for the obedience and reverence due to so great a Pastor, but with very great fear and repugnance. . . . But I will not write to you about myself, for then this paper would be covered with tears rather than with ink, torn as I am for my sins from the soil in which I have been planted and tended with so great labour and patience of my dear father Philip, and of my sweetest and most loving brothers. Never will their memory fade from my heart, though I were sent to India instead of France. Blessed be God, *it is another who has guided me, and has led me whither I would not.* I implore your Reverence with all the fervour of my heart to keep my memory alive in the prayers and Sacrifices of the congregation from which I am now cut off, or at least separated, like a rotten member. As to those affairs of the house which are before the Pope, your Reverence may be sure that you have no need of other mediators, for his Blessedness feels the most tender affection for Father Philip, and for his children, one and all. . . . I think your Reverence knows that the most illustrious Mgr. di Todi has promised the façade (of the Chiesa Nuova), and perhaps the High Altar as well. And the Pope will in due time think of the vaulting of the nave, and the house of the Congregation."[1]

A few months after Bordini had been installed as bishop of Cavaillon, Pope Clement commanded Philip to tell Tarugi to come from Naples to Rome, without assigning any reason for his doing so. Now, as we have seen, Philip loved Tarugi even more tenderly than his other sons, and was always dreading lest his ardent zeal and his unceasing labours should wear him out

[1] MS. letter in the Archives of the Naples Oratory.

before his time. Thus he wrote to Tarugi through F. Germanico Fedeli the following letter amongst many: "Father Philip longs to be able to do something to help you, but all he can do is to pray to God for you, and at the same time to entreat you, as he has done so often, not to plunge into so many things, and to spare yourself as much as you can, and not to let your zeal hurry you away, and lead you to take on yourself so many burdens and works as it does; for if you do, you will not last long. . . . F. Philip's great annoyance and regret are that he sees you have, in spite of your age and infirmities, cast yourself headlong into such a round of confessions, sermons, and instructions, visiting the sick, assisting the dying, reconciling enemies, and shrinking from nothing that turns up. . . ." And in another letter he writes: "Father Philip has given me a hat of his, which he says is exactly the thing for your Reverence, for it is very broad in the brim, and so will protect you from sun and wind. . . . He sends it with very great pleasure, and he knows you will wear it with a pleasure still greater."

These affectionate apprehensions, and the exceeding joy the saint felt in his old age in seeing his beloved children again, might lead us to suppose that he was delighted to receive this command from the Pope; but it is far from improbable that he suspected the reason of Tarugi's recall to Rome. He, however, obeyed without delay, and Tarugi came to Rome with a heart full of gladness, and without presentiment or suspicion of what awaited him there. He had not seen his beloved father for six years, and his heart bounded with joy at thought of embracing him once more, and living at his side. The moment he reached Rome he ran to Philip's room, threw himself on the ground at his feet, and

kissed them again and again. Philip's heart was overflowing; he raised his best-beloved son from the ground, embraced him eagerly, and then withdrew hastily into another room to weep for joy. And then, as if his emotion were too great, he bade Tarugi go away, because he wanted to say office, and called Consolini to say it with him as usual. But Consolini looked at Tarugi, and entreated the saint to take him as his substitute this once, and Philip answered laughingly: "Well, let him stay where he is, for he is a sort of saint."

Philip then set Tarugi to hear confessions in the church, and put under his especial care four young Jews who had been recently converted. Tarugi looked on them as little angels, and says of them in a letter he wrote to Naples: "They are exceedingly quick, and like four little jewels." On All Souls' day Tarugi preached at the Vallicella, and F. Bozio says in one of his letters that the congregation was immense, and that the sermon gave great delight. But the brightness of Tarugi's joy in being once more with Philip was too soon overcast.

A rumour began to be heard in Rome that the Pope meant to make F. Tarugi a bishop, and though it was yet only a vague rumour, it pierced his heart as with a thorn. When, however, his first audience of the Pope passed off without any allusion to the matter, he began to breathe more freely, and wrote with great glee to the fathers in Naples, urging them, however, to pray more than ever for him. His consolation was but of short duration; for on the 15th November of that same year, 1592, the Pope sent for him and told him that he meant to make him a bishop. Tarugi's account of the scene, in a letter he wrote to F. Talpa, is of striking and

touching beauty. He says: "Alas! into what a sea of bitter grief and uttermost tribulation I am cast! Now I shall have to pay for all my days of peace and consolation, and already I begin to have a foretaste of the risk I run of my salvation, now in the time of my old age—an old age weak and broken with many toils and cares.[1] Yesterday, which was Sunday, early in the morning, the Maestro di Camera invited me, by order of the Pope, to dine with him at the palace; and after dinner I went to the Pope, and found him sitting with his table cleared away, and conversing with an attendant. I spoke of many things with his Holiness, but I saw his countenance was not bright and cheerful towards me, as it had been the time before. I had a presentiment that this day was full of peril, and I had prepared for it by many prayers and masses, my own and those of others. His Holiness then rose from table and withdrew into his room, saying to Signor Silvio and to me: 'Come into my room;' and as we went he said some pleasant things about the journey we had made together.[2] When we had entered the room, Signor Silvio took his leave, and the Pope then led me into another room, which is his study; and all at once, without any preface, he said to me: 'We have resolved to make you archbishop of Avignon.' I stood there stunned and speechless; but at length I took courage and said: 'And who am I, holy Father, that I should dare to reply, or show repugnance to any will of yours, since even when your Blessedness was in lesser dignity than now I never dared to contradict you? But I pray your

[1] Tarugi was then 67 years old, and died in 1608, at the age of 83.

[2] The journey referred to is that in which Tarugi accompanied Cardinal Alessandrino and Pope Clement, who was then only an auditor of the Rota, in the embassy sent to France by S. Pius V. See book ii. chap. 9.

Holiness, give me gracious leave to open to you all my whole heart.' Then he gave me leave to speak, and I unfolded to him the long roll of my infirmities and ignorance and incapacity, and concluded by saying that my conscience now forbade me, and that I had never yet done anything against its dictates. I then proposed others to him, and amongst these the bishop of Cavaillon (Bordini) who now rules that church; but all my talking and my arguing were in vain. This struggle lasted more than half an hour, and at last I pressed him so hard that he gave me time, and said one word to which I clung with hope—that he would not force my consent. When I took my leave, I knelt and entreated him to release me from this trial, and from the injunction he had laid on me; for that once in Naples a bishop had thrown himself at my feet and entreated me never to accept a bishopric, by reason of the scandal I should give, being so well known, and having so often spoken to the contrary; and I ended by saying that I would rather die than give scandal to others. Then the Pope said to me: 'Set your mind at ease, for it is our will to draw you forth from the congregation that you may render service to the universal Church.' And he embraced me before leaving me, and told me to pray about it. And to-day I have been praying about it all day long, and my soul is melted away and consumed within me. I have also drawn up a memorial to his Holiness, and given it to F. Philip, who will take it to him to-morrow; and in it I have reminded him both of my many infirmities, and also of his own words, *that he would not force my consent*—first craving his pardon for my doing so."

In his great love for Tarugi, Philip had undertaken to go to the Pope with his refusal, and to do everything

to induce him to accept it. He went to Clement, trusting in the loving veneration the Pope had always shown him; and he entreated him not to take from his side now in his extreme old age the son of his especial love. But although Clement had reluctantly consented to excuse Philip himself from accepting the sacred purple, in regard of Tarugi he was inflexible. He spoke to the saint of his own solemn obligation to make provision for the welfare of the universal Church, and he expressed his will so decidedly, that Philip saw that further resistance was impossible. The only thing he could extort from the Holy Father was a respite of a few days, that Tarugi might have time to calm his troubled spirit, and realize his changed position. On the 30th November, Clement sent for him again, and said to him peremptorily and curtly: "We will that, come what may, you take the rule of the church of Avignon, and that you go to die there for the love of Christ. And this we command you with the fullest authority and power we possess;" and that he might feel the force of these last words, the Pope repeated them again. Tarugi was overwhelmed and crushed by the majesty of this command; he burst into tears, and without a word to signify his obedience he cast himself at the Pope's feet and kissed them. The Pope then twice raised him tenderly from the ground and embraced him, and bade him make up his mind to sacrifice himself for the good of the Church.[1]

Tarugi had, however, still some resources left. On the 2nd December he was summoned to undergo the usual examination. The Pope bade him explain the words of Jesus to S. Peter: *when thou shalt be old,*

[1] *Vita del Tarugi*, at the end of Ricci's edition of Bacci's Life of S. Philip, and the manuscript letters in the archives of the Naples Oratory.

thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and lead thee whither thou wouldest not. But Tarugi answered: "Holy Father, I came not here to be examined, but to protest, if any liberty of speech be left to me, that on no consideration will I accept the Church of Avignon; and, in addition to all my insufficiencies, I have here a letter from my physician in Naples, who knows my constitution and my ailments well, and he says I should not reach my journey's end; or, if I did ever reach Avignon, I should be quite disabled and fit for nothing, and that it would cause my death. Here is the letter, for I wish to discharge my conscience fully." But the Pope refused to allow himself to be moved from his purpose by this serious difficulty raised by Tarugi. Without even looking at the letter, he said, almost playfully: "Why, this doctor of yours is a prophet, I suppose?" "No, Holy Father," answered Tarugi, "not a prophet; but a man of learning, who judges on the principles of his art, and has known my constitution these many years." The Pope then cut short the discussion by bidding Tarugi answer the questions to be proposed to him. Besides his Holiness, there were four cardinals present, together with F. Toledo, afterwards Cardinal,—Maestro Alessandro, F. Stefano of the Gesù, the bishop of Cassano, and Mgr. Panfilio; and Tarugi began to collect his thoughts as best he could for his examination. The Pope's long experience in S. Philip's school of mortification led him to suspect that Tarugi might try to escape the episcopate by answering wrongly and pretending ignorance; and therefore before the examination began, he said to him: "Hearken, father; whether you answer well or ill, in any case archbishop of Avignon you shall be." Tarugi saw that his last resource

was gone, and answered calmly and satisfactorily the questions asked him. When all was over, Tarugi wrote an account of it to F. Talpa, saying, that though the Pope had shut his mouth so that he could not speak, he had not taken the pen from his hand so that he could not open his heart to a friend. Towards the close of this letter he writes thus: "What I have gone through during these few days God alone knows; and, moreover, the confusion of mind and faintness of heart that have come over me this morning, as I reflect on the weight of the burden laid upon me, my own ignorance, the weakness of my failing body, and above all these, the almost certain ruin and damnation of my soul, if God in His great mercy aid me not. This is the plight I am in now; now begins for me the voice of wailing, and peace is removed far from me henceforward. Now am I banished both from Rome and Naples, and far from you, my dearest father Antonio, my sweetest and best of brothers; far from all those my reverend fathers, from my beloved brothers of the house, and from all my friends outside, so that, when I think of this, my soul refuses comfort. Wherefore, on this account I smite my breast and confess my many sins, and the little use I have made of the graces of God. . . . I am quite ashamed to appear, not only amongst those outside, but amongst our reverend fathers and brothers of the congregation. I fancy I see by their looks that they have found me an open transgressor and violator of the rules of christian perfection, and that I have now by this one act undone all the good I have ever done by my words. Still, I resolve to fall back for support on God, and on the witness of my own conscience."

Tarugi's promotion to the archbishopric of Avignon

was a terrible blow to the Oratory of Naples, and it fell precisely when he had begun an undertaking before which any less daring heart than his would have recoiled. On the 15th August of this same year he had, with Philip's encouragement and blessing, laid the first stone of the fair and stately church of the Girolamini. The ceremony had been performed with great magnificence and pomp. The stone was blessed and laid in its place by Annibale of Capua, archbishop of Naples, attended by his chapter and by many bishops of the kingdom, amidst an immense concourse of the clergy, the nobles, and the people of the city, at the head of whom were seen the Viceroy, the Duke of Miranda, with his Duchess and his court. Just as Philip had begun building the Vallicella with two hundred crowns in hand, so Tarugi had only two hundred ducats when he laid the foundation-stone of the Church of the Girolamini; and now that he was gone, whose fame and influence were so great in Naples, it was feared that the work must stop. Many even thought that the departure of Tarugi would fatally injure the growth and spiritual prosperity of the congregation; for the Neapolitans loved him much, and it was known that S. Philip had in him a confidence without limit. When tidings of his nomination to the See of Avignon reached them, the congregation, no less than the people of Naples, were filled with consternation and dismay. Some persons, we are told, thought the Oratory could not survive the blow; and there were even religious who said openly that now the congregation must be broken up, its exercises discontinued, and its inheritance divided amongst them. Tarugi, in one of his letters, speaks of this gossip with great sadness, and resolved that every effort should be made to give the lie to these prophets of disaster.

Before leaving for Avignon, he wrote a letter to F. Talpa, in Philip's name as well as in his own, to this effect: "Some (and here he names some religious orders) fancy that our work will now come to nought, and the building of the church stop, and that they will gather up the fragments of our heritage. . . . But do you, my fathers, stand firm, and draw nearer than ever to God and to one another in unfailing love, for *opus Dei est*, the work is of God. . . . We have the greater reason to be strong and of good courage, and to accept our lot as it is, when we see that all these religious bodies are themselves very shaky, and none of them enjoys the peace our congregation enjoys, and the house of Naples in particular. I will not at this time write to the Duchess of Miranda; go often to see her, for she wishes it much, and get her to hear F. Flaminio preach. I am writing to the Duchess of Torremajore; when you see her let her see that I mention her in this letter, and the Duchess of Andria too, and that I beg them to do all they can to further our Oratory."[1]

But the main strength and support of the Naples Congregation at this time of sorrow and trial was our saint himself, who, in his little room at the Vallicella, had quietly made provision for all its needs the moment Tarugi was recalled to Rome. He either divined the intention of the Pope, or was guided by a supernatural light, so that, before Tarugi had left Naples, the void his departure would leave was already filled. F. Talpa was to retain the office of Rector, and to him Philip added F. Flaminio Ricci, a preacher of unusual excellence, who was wont to say that the best sermons are made rather by prayer than by study.

[1] This letter is in the archives of the Naples Oratory. It bears date 19th December 1592.

F. Ricci was selected for this important work, because he united to the Oratorian simplicity of style a remarkable solidity of doctrine, and that grace and suavity and charity which characterized the eloquence of S. Philip's school; and because he was, in all others respects, fitted to make the loss of Tarugi less bitterly regretted. He was a true son of S. Philip; and, though he had entered the congregation later than many others, he yielded to none in the perfection of his life, and his devotion to our saint. His call to the Oratory was in every way remarkable. He was of the noble family of the Ricci, and in the service of the Cardinal of Sermoneta. While riding through Rome one day in the year 1578, Philip met him, looked fixedly at him, and, though he had never seen him before, said to him, in the words of Jesus: *Come, follow me.* From that moment Flaminio gave himself up into the hands of our saint, and became his disciple, son, and friend. He was soon admitted into the congregation and was ordained priest, and he was ere long a perfect pattern of christian mortification, and a close imitator of the humility of his holy father and master. He was allowed to refuse a bishopric offered him by Pope Clement, who with great difficulty admitted Philip's plea that the congregation would be too seriously weakened if all its best subjects were taken from it thus. And now he was sent to take the place of Tarugi in Naples, where, in conjunction with F. Talpa and the Blessed Giovenale Ancina, and the other Fathers, he sustained and increased the splendour of the rising congregation.

Though Philip had failed in preventing Tarugi from being made an archbishop, he succeeded better in regard of Baronio; but no sooner had he gone to his rest than the Pope made Baronio protonotary apostolic,

and then cardinal. His wonderful learning and virtue had long shone with such lustre that several Popes had tried to raise him to high dignity, but hitherto in vain. Gregory XIII. had fixed on him for the Church of Sora; Sixtus V. chose him for that of Teano, also in his native country; and Gregory XIV. had, at the request of the Duke of Urbino, named him bishop of Sinigaglia. But in his great humility and his repugnance to ecclesiastical dignity, he had refused these offers, alleging as a reason or an excuse that the burden of the episcopal office would compel him to give up his great work of the Annals, which were received with so much favour. And, as we have seen that in everything connected with the Annals Philip displayed an unwonted and unremitting ardour, he supported the reasons of Baronio with all his influence, and induced these Popes not to insist on his submission to their wishes. And to this he added that, although Baronio's life was that of a simple Oratorian, yet it was at the same time a life most usefully employed in the service of the universal Church. Clement VIII. had always esteemed and loved Baronio, and therefore when elected Pope he resolved to promote him to high office; but as he was the Pope's own confessor the idea of a bishopric was out of the question. It is probable, indeed, that in giving him to the Pope as his confessor, our saint had thought amongst other things that this office would ensure his not being made a bishop. The Pope felt this, but bethought himself that, though Baronio could not be a bishop, he might be a cardinal. He even spoke of it to Philip in confidence, but our saint was so averse to honours, either for himself or for his sons, that he did all he could to divert the Pope from his purpose, and for the time with success. Still Philip

knew the indomitable will of Clement, and remembered all that had befallen Tarugi, and could not therefore divest himself of an apprehension that sooner or later Cesare would be constrained to be a cardinal. One day he spoke of his fears to Baronio, either that he might not be taken unawares, or it may be to test the humility of his beloved son. Baronio listened with consternation, cast himself at Philip's feet, and implored him to do all he could to avert so great a calamity. He entreated him to say all the ill of him he could to the Pope, to dwell on his utter helplessness and incapacity, and to save him by every means in his power from this trial. And he declared that he would never move from Philip's feet until he promised him that he would help him to the utmost of his power. Philip's heart was filled with joy and thankfulness; he had always dreaded lest, in urging Baronio to write the Annals, he might have endangered his humility; and now he saw this much loved son, so renowned and so applauded, rooted and grounded immovably in that spirit of mortification and humility he prized so greatly.

And in truth not one faintest cloud of self-consciousness tarnished the pure splendour of that great soul. When, shortly after Philip's death, Clement resolved to raise Baronio to the most sublime dignity of the Church, the son proved himself worthy of his holy father; even Philip himself could hardly have given a more perfect example of self-abnegation and humility.

Baronio relates, in a letter to F. Talpa, what took place on his nomination to the office of protonotary apostolic. "Hardly dare I," he says, "take pen in hand, I am so overwhelmed with shame at having to give you tidings which cover me with confusion, and

will cause your reverence and the other fathers and brothers no common sorrow. The thunderbolt has fallen on me from a clear sky. Monday evening, which was the 20th November, about an hour after nightfall, when the Pope had made his confession as usual, he sat down in his chair of state as if about to do some act as Pontiff, and began by saying to me: 'F. Cesare, we wish to ask of you a favour, and it is that you do not resist our will to make use of your services.' Other words then followed, of like modesty and humility, until my foreboding of evil compelled me to interrupt him by saying: 'Your Holiness terrifies me with an exordium such as this, for is it not my bounden duty to serve you always without entreaty?' And then his Blessedness went on to say that he meant to give me, as being in keeping with my studies on the Annals, the title of protonotary, as there was then a vacancy, and that he had reflected on it much. To this I answered with all modesty that the Annals had made their way thus far without any such title; and that even if his Blessedness had resolved on this, it would be quite enough to make me an honorary protonotary, as many others are, without obliging me to a change of dress, which would cover me with shame and confusion and be a scandal to others. I told him I had noticed that many prelates who had come from Germany to see me, when they found me in my threadbare greasy cassock, had said to others that they were more edified with this than with my having written the Annals. They had thought to find me surrounded with many servants, with costly raiment, and hardly to be got at. These and other such like things I ventured to say, and then his Holiness, seeing that I was bent on refusing the proffered dignity, *thundered out his dread command that*

I must, in virtue of holy obedience, cease all resistance. Yet not even for this did I hold my peace, but bemoaned myself that he should treat me worse than others by uttering his final precept without giving me a moment for reflexion. I reminded him how differently he had treated Monsignor of Avignon (Tarugi), how he had listened to all he had to say, and sent for him again and again before putting forth his authority in virtue of holy obedience; and I begged him to give me some brief space of time to collect my thoughts and pray for guidance. To this his Holiness replied that it was quite enough that he (the Pope) had thought about it long, and prayed much too, and said many masses for this intention, and that he had made up his mind irrevocably. When I again began to speak he would not listen to me, but repeated his command in virtue of holy obedience, which wrought in me this marvellous effect, that it took from me all power to speak, and I could only stammer and tremble without saying a word. The which distress his Holiness perceiving, he began to laugh, and a third time said: 'I command you in virtue of holy obedience.' But I, seeing that no reasoning of mine was listened to, betook myself to prayers, which had no better success, for the Pope then rang his bell, and lo, in came the Maestro di Camera with Mgr. Diego del Campo, bringing with them a bundle of prelates' purple robes, and the Pope then rising from his seat bade me take off my cassock." Baronio goes on to narrate how the Pope then left him with these two prelates, and how he struggled and fought them off for a long time, till at length he threw himself on the floor sweating with exertion and with fear, and protesting he would never submit to such violence; and then he besought them so earnestly and piteously to spare him,

that they ended by going to the Pope to tell him they could do nothing with Baronio, and that he had better be allowed to go home for the time. The Pope expressed great displeasure at this resolute obstinacy, and consented at length and with reluctance to wait until the morning; but he repeated with energy that his decision was irreversible, and that Baronio should be a prelate, by sheer force if necessary. Baronio managed to get back to the Vallicella with his countenance all fallen, and as one who has suffered a great mischance. "When I got back to the house," he continues, "I said not a word to any one, but went off to Father Philip's grave, and implored him earnestly to help me now as he had often helped me in times past. Then I gathered together the fathers in full congregation, and related to them the whole doleful tragedy; whereat they all felt sore affliction, and were as men crushed by this fresh and unexpected blow. We talked over every expedient we could think of, and it was agreed that two fathers should go to the Pope early the next day, and in the name of the congregation entreat his Holiness to have some regard to its needs. And that same evening Cardinal Cusano was prayed to intercede for us with the Pope, and Cardinal Paleotto offered to secure for us the intervention of the Cardinals of Florence and Verona. No time was, however, given us for this; early in the morning came to our house Mgr. Diego with the bundle of robes, and the Pope's command that I should put them on. I was in the Sacristy with Mgr. Panfilio and the abbate Maffa and others; and all together took off my cassock by force and clothed me in my own despite. Have pity on me in your great charity and console our afflicted brethren; ask them to forgive me that I am the occasion of their

grief, and to pray for me, oppressed as I am with this sore evil, and dreading even worse."[1]

This worse dread was the impending offer of the Cardinalate, and it was but too well founded. The matter was commonly talked of all over Rome, Philip had almost let Baronio into the secret of the Pope's intentions, and it was, moreover, generally believed that the saint had clearly foretold it. People reminded each other that Philip would often, half in jest, put a cardinal's berretta on Cesare's head, and that so long ago as twenty years before his death he had spoken of him to Mgr. Paolo Recuperati as a future cardinal. F. Francesco Neri, of the Company of Jesus, also averred that once, when he had ventured to ask Philip whether Baronio would be one day Pope, the saint had replied at once: "Cardinal, yes; Pope, certainly no." Very many persons remembered that Francesco Aldobrandini, a nephew of Pope Clement, noticed two cardinals' coats-of-arms in Philip's room and asked him whose they were; and that the saint had answered with a smile: "You don't believe, then, that after my death I am to have two cardinals of my congregation?" Still, in spite of all these sinister indications, Baronio tried to deceive himself, as people often do when some great mischance is impending. Thus, in reply to the B. Giovenale Ancina, who had spoken to him of his cardinalate, he wrote: "I laughed heartily as I read your Reverence's letter and saw you in such fear where there is no reason for fear at all. May God keep me as safe from all other evils as I am from this. Your Reverence should not be so easily led to believe that beasts of burden can be made to fly."

[1] Marciano, vol. i. lib. iii. cap. 11. Bernabei, Vita Card. Baronii. Serra, Vita del Ven. Card. Baronio.

Shortly after this, while Baronio was spending a few days at Frascati, he had one night either a vivid dream or a vision; Philip stood at his side, and told him that God willed something of him, and bade him take good heed to his salvation. This vision revived his fears, and on his return to Rome he found his coming promotion talked of by every one. He thought at first of saving himself by flight, but this the congregation disapproved as savouring of indiscretion, and perhaps of presumption too. Thus dissuaded from flight he prayed fervently and with many tears; he fasted, scourged himself with many disciplines, entreated the prayers of all his friends, and made a vow to visit the seven churches of Rome barefoot, if only God would deliver him from this crushing burden. He protested to his friends that, were he free to choose, he would far rather die than accept the dreaded dignity. And then it suddenly occurred to him that he might escape by inducing the Pope to bestow the sacred purple on Tarugi; he would thus honour the congregation he loved, and honour it in the person of the one of its sons for whom he felt a special veneration. The Pope received the suggestion so graciously that, to the amazement of all, Baronio appeared among them—it was the 4th June—with a countenance all smiles and gladness; and soon there came a messenger from Cardinal Sforza, a great friend of the congregation, to say that on the following morning Tarugi was to be raised to the Cardinalate. Baronio ran at once to pour out his soul in gratitude to God and our blessed Lady and F. Philip for his rescue from the threatening peril. While he was thus engaged a second messenger arrived, and commanded Baronio in the Pope's name to remain at home all

the next morning, for that at fitting time he would be sent for to be created cardinal. At this message Baronio shuddered and turned pale, but soon recovering himself he answered that he would at an early hour next morning lay before his Holiness the reasons why he could not accept this lofty dignity. Late as it was he assembled the congregation, and again proposed that he should take flight from Rome that very night; but as this course seemed to the fathers both hazardous and disrespectful, it was decreed that Baronio himself should see the Pope very early in the morning.

Pope Clement had foreseen the resistance Baronio would make to his promotion, and therefore bade his nephew, Cardinal Aldobrandini, remain with him all that night at the Vatican, and take care on no account to let Baronio in until the time appointed for the Consistory. But Cesare was up betimes, forced his way into the room of the Cardinal who was still in bed, and so entreated and wept that the Cardinal, not knowing how else to get rid of him, rose and led him, in spite of the prohibition he had received, to the presence of the Pope. It is needless to relate what Baronio said and did as he lay there in anguish at the Pope's feet; it is enough to say that Clement VIII. heard his pleadings unmoved, and said to him at length: "We command you, in virtue of our apostolic authority and under pain of excommunication, to hold your peace and obey." At these words Baronio wept aloud, and said not another word.

The life of Baronio is not the subject of this book of mine, nor is that of Tarugi, who was in that same Consistory created cardinal and translated to the see of Siena, while Bordini was moved to Avignon. But both

Baronio and Tarugi are so intimately bound up with Philip's life that our labours would have been incomplete without this notice of their career; and, moreover, our divine Lord tells us that *from the fruit the tree is known.*

Pope Clement next cast his eyes on the Blessed Giovenale Ancina, of whose holiness and learning he was well aware, and who yielded to none in the zeal with which he followed the example and drank in the spirit of S. Philip. We left him last in Naples, whither he had been sent in the month of October 1586. Philip loved him tenderly, and tried to bring him back again to Rome in 1589; but when he heard from Tarugi of the good he was doing in Naples by his preaching and the example of his charity, he sacrificed his own wish to the welfare of the Naples Congregation. In 1591, when Tarugi had been removed to Avignon, Philip again sought to recall F. Giovenale to his side, fearing lest he should not otherwise see him again on earth. Rumours were already rife that F. Giovenale would ere long be a bishop, and in reference to these he wrote to our saint as follows: "A bishop I will not be; to come to Rome I am neither willing nor unwilling. Above all else I wish obedience. . . . I am afraid of Rome, but at the bidding of my Lord, I am ready to go there to be crucified afresh." But as he longed with all his heart to embrace his beloved father once more before his death, he urged Philip to come and visit Naples, where the purity of the air and the skill of the physicians would infuse new vigour into his enfeebled frame. But our saint's life was becoming daily more secluded and hidden, and no inducements, however great, could avail to change its course. Tarugi was then at the Vallicella, and he so earnestly entreated the holy father

not to remove Giovenale at a moment so critical, that Philip once more sacrificed his longing desire to the good of the Congregation of Naples. When, however, Tarugi and Baronio were made cardinals, the fathers of Rome deemed it absolutely necessary to have at least F. Giovenale amongst them, and forthwith recalled him to Rome. Giovenale obeyed at once, though it cost him bitter sorrow to leave so many friends and spiritual children, and though he was haunted by a vague presentiment that his journey boded ill. As he mounted his horse for Rome, many stood weeping around him. To them all he said some words of consolation and encouragement, adding: "It is for myself I fear—I fear for myself."

When F. Giovenale received the mournful tidings of the death of S. Philip, his master and father for so many years, he felt a yearning to live a life of greater austerity and seclusion, and even thought of entering some one of the severer orders of religion, or of founding one himself. These thoughts were suggested by his great religious fervour and his grief for Philip's death; but he was influenced also by his dread of being compelled to accept the burden of the episcopate, the rather that Philip had once said playfully to him that he would some day be a bishop. When he found that all his friends, men of learning and sanctity, such as Tarugi and Baronio, dissuaded him from leaving the congrega tion, and that the Pope himself forbade his seeking any change of state, he went to Rome in obedience to the decree of the fathers. He was still haunted by the spectre of the episcopate, and wrote to F. Angelo Velli, who was most urgently pressing his return to Rome: "This is one of the greatest mortifications I can ever know, for with all this *prelatizing* in the congregation

we are drifting into a slavery the worse that our chains are all of gold, and so fair to look upon that we think not of their weight. Lord, have mercy on us! Give me your blessing, my father, and pray for me that this chalice may be removed from me should I come to Rome." Still more beautiful is the spirit of a letter written at this time to Cardinal Baronio: "Why is it, I entreat you tell me, that in your last letter you urge me so strongly to come to Rome? Surely you ought to know that for a long time past I cannot bear the thought of Rome; and now you are one of the sacred senate of Cardinals, it behoves me to fear it more than ever—I had almost said to hate it and flee from it as far as I can. Rome may keep its noise and tumult, its visits of ceremony, its thronging into gilded palaces amidst the murmurs of the envious. Courtiers may love the crowded city, and toil to win the favour of the great. To me the city is a prison, and my paradise the solitude in which I can meditate on death. Here, in this loveliest of all cities (Naples), the soul exults in its freedom from the cares which disquiet you in Rome; and the peaceful meditation of divine things is sweet to its taste, and it thrives and fattens as in plenteous pasture, and, as if borne up in ecstasy to highest heaven, drinks to the full from the ever-springing fountain of life and bliss. And yet, notwithstanding all this, you cling to your resolve. But you will say, Why all this repugnance of yours? I will tell you in a few words. Recall to mind what I foretold to you long before, what I wrote to you about your being created cardinal. Truly *I am not a prophet, nor am I the son of a prophet*, yet I confess I foresee even now from afar the distress and calamity that are coming on me. A word is enough to the wise. Tell me, I entreat you, father, what is it you

want of me. Why do you so press me to come to Rome? Is it to be crucified afresh? The will of God be done on earth as it is in heaven!" A year after F. Giovenale came to Rome, the Pope and the Duke of Savoy concurred in selecting him for a bishopric in Piedmont; and as he knew that neither argument nor entreaties were of avail, he took to flight, and spent five months in pious pilgrimages in the marches round about Loreto. When it was thought the storm had blown over he returned to Rome at the earnest request of the congregation; but he was ere long compelled, in spite of protests and resistance, to accept the episcopal dignity. All that he could obtain from the Pope was that instead of Mondovì, the diocese to which he had been named, he should be sent to Saluzzo, which he chose because it was poorer and more laborious.

If Philip had done nothing else than form such men as these, we should need no further proof that he was a saint indeed. These were men of no common greatness, and he had so formed them on the teaching of the holy Gospel, so pruned away and mortified all pride and self-love, that they stand out above their fellows, so strong, and free, and self-possessed, so enkindled with divine love, that dignities and honours are in their eyes only hindrances in their way to God. If we look at S. Philip's school of mortifications, their number, their severity, and their insistence, we may be at first sight tempted to deem them excessive and exaggerated; but when we look upon their result we are lost in admiration of its beauty and perfection. The annals of the Church present us few examples of men who, when summoned to the highest offices in her service, have shown themselves at once so humble and so strong as these earliest sons of S. Philip. They shrank from

honours with a trembling dread; they boldly refused them when offered; but neither their boldness nor their fears made them forget the obedience due to the Vicar of Christ. There is in their bearing and their language a blended dignity and submission worthy of our study and our imitation.

But while humility was the principal motive of this noble repudiation of all earthly honours, there was yet another which demands our attention. It was S. Philip's bold resolve to found a Congregation in which the ardour of fraternal love should hold the place of vows, and be the main incentive to the loftiest perfection of the religious life. And the result justified his daring hope. These first companions of S. Philip loved one another, and they all loved the congregation with a strong and tender love. It was this ever-growing love that cheered the old age of our saint as he looked around him on the priests of his congregation, and it was his one longing desire to strengthen and perpetuate it. When the fathers of the Oratory were called upon to leave it they felt a bitter sorrow, as if they were torn from a mother's bosom and from the brothers of their heart. This was brought out with striking force and beauty when, on the death of S. Philip, F. Giovenale Ancina thought of leaving the community. Baronio, who was then Superior, answered his request for counsel thus: "What hast thou done! May God forgive thee! As I read thy letter I was seized with a trembling as if I had been startled by unexpected thunder. Art thou so forgetful of thyself and of thy brethren that thou revolvest in thy mind things which would brand thee with the note of fickleness, and us thy brethren with the reproach of cruel harshness? Be it so that thou longest for rest and peace, who of us would disquiet

thee? Are there no quiet nooks in our house, no places of tranquil retirement, neither at Naples, nor here, nor at Sanseverino? Surely this is not the example left us by our father, that thou shouldst forsake the house and think only of thyself; for he, even in his extremest age, lived never for himself, but every moment for the good of all. It beseems us, dearest brother, to follow him, and this will be our peace. . . . Remember I am always here to serve thee in everything, and to promote in every way thy comfort. . . . If, then, there be in thee any charity, any bowels of mercy, I entreat and conjure thee that thou give me back my peace by another letter of thine; lest, startled and dismayed as I am, I be overcome with excess of grief, and so die. I say it again, I shall live if thou abide in thy present state. . . . Would, O my brother, that I could embrace thee once more, thou who wast suckled with me at the breasts of our loving mother! . . . . Meanwhile, God be with thee, and give thee peace; but not for thyself alone, without thought of us." Tarugi, then archbishop of Avignon, also wrote to Giovenale a long and beautiful letter, of which the concluding words are these: "Should your Reverence enter some religious order, you may find in it greater aids to perfection by reason of your vows; but how those vows are kept, and what union of hearts and peace there is, you cannot now conjecture. In these days of ours, I say it from long experience, and with due respect and honour to those who keep their rule, nearly all orders of religion have much declined; and to this there are but few exceptions, if indeed there be any. Now, weighing what our congregation now enjoys, its fervour and its peace, and its fruitful daily spiritual exercises, I much prefer it to every other state. But

if it now come to pass that the Reverend F. Giovenale should forsake the Congregation, the mother who has nurtured him so many years, and should leave all in sadness behind him, and cast a slur upon them, and refuse to hearken to the counsel of his reverend fathers and brothers; if this, I say, should come to pass, it would pierce my heart with greater grief than if our Church were to fall, and the house be overthrown, and all whom the congregation now embraces in her bosom were to perish all at once like the sons of Job. Wherefore, if I may counsel and entreat, if I have any light to discern in the soul of your Reverence what are temptations and what are good inspirations, I would implore and conjure you to put away these thoughts of yours; for most assuredly they are only temptations, the stronger and more dangerous that they lurk behind a pretext of greater perfection. I beg your Reverence not to give me the pain of hearing any more of these thoughts and plans of yours.

The Archbishop of Avignon, who loves you."

CHAPTER XVII.

CLOSING YEARS OF PHILIP'S LIFE—VISION OF THE MADONNA.

THE month of November 1592 was one of bitter grief and anguish of heart at the Vallicella. Father Philip was again ill, and the severity and obstinacy of the disease, together with his advanced age, made his recovery very doubtful; there were times indeed when those around him gave up all hope. When the fever had gone on for forty days without any tendency to decrease, Cordella the physician came very early one morning, doubting whether he should find Philip still alive; but the saint, looking at him with a smile, said: "Make your mind easy, my own Cordella, I am not going to die of this illness." So certain was this conviction in Philip's mind that he would not let his penitents go to any other confessor, but said: "Have a little patience, my children; I mean to hear your confessions for Christmas." And he kept his word. At Christmas he was quite well, though somewhat weak; and his recovery was so unexpected and so rapid that Cordella and the other physicians pronounced it undoubtedly miraculous.

This illness of Philip's was a peculiarly bitter sorrow to Tarugi. He had just come to Rome, never again, as he fondly hoped, to leave his beloved father, and he had found himself torn from the congregation by

the decree of the Pope, and sent to the distant see of Avignon; and now Philip seemed to him to be dying in his arms. On the 19th December, while the fathers were still in painful suspense, Tarugi wrote to Naples: "our father Philip continues alive by miracle; the physicians have no real hope. This is the fifteenth day of the moon, and this morning F. Philip is not worse, but he cannot expectorate; his breathing is uneasy, and he is much exhausted, but marvellously resigned and fervent in spirit. If this letter reaches you in time I commend him earnestly to your prayers, according to our duty and obligation; for his life is most precious to us for the sake of his example and his prayers, as well as his great influence with the Pope, who loves him so much." On the 26th December he writes joyously to F. Talpa: "Cheer up; God has begun that work of yours, and God in His infinite mercy will finish it; do not doubt that for a moment, but have faith in God. Our dear father has had a more severe struggle than ever with death, and he has come out conqueror. Still by the grace of God he lives, to the great amazement of all Rome, and of the doctors themselves. He sent me to ask the Pope to pray for his Reverence, and the Pope did so, and then all at once he began to mend." A few days later he wrote again, and as Philip still felt the effects of his illness, he says: "our father Philip complains that we here in Rome, and you, the reverend fathers and brothers in the house of Naples, are keeping him in bed all this time, because we do not unite in praying as we ought for his recovery. And, in truth, I believe that God would hear our prayers; but we ask and receive not, because while we ask our hearts are cold as ice. Heap on the logs, pile up the glowing embers

blow the fire lustily; then the flame will burst forth heavenward, and God will grant us what we ask." Within a few days the saint was perfectly well.

When Philip was again restored to health he began to shrink in his humility from any longer commanding others as Superior, and indeed he had been long pondering how he could best relieve himself of this burden of authority by resigning his office. It seemed to him, now more than ever, a desirable thing, and a fitting preparation for death, that he should be subject to another and obey; and this had become his one great ambition and desire. One thing alone restrained and embarrassed him, the fear of saddening the hearts of his beloved sons by ceasing to be their Father and Head, and handing them over to the rule of another. The illness from which he had just recovered, his advanced age, and the desire which had haunted him always of living at the last a more recollected and contemplative life, at length gave him courage to assemble the fathers and entreat them, for the greater good of the congregation, to choose a new superior. He spoke of his old age and his many infirmities, and the pressing need he felt of a better preparation for the death which could not now be far distant. The fathers were deeply moved by the pathetic earnestness of this appeal, but not one would assent to his proposal; if Philip were no longer their superior, the central core and bond of their life would be gone from them. Still they felt that they must sooner or later learn to live without him; he was drawing near his eightieth year, and suffered much from many ailments and infirmities; and therefore they entreated him to give them time to think and pray that God would show them the way they should take. Some little time passed thus, and

then Philip, seeing that he could not bring the fathers to listen to his request, betook himself to Cardinals Cusano and Borromeo, who were dear to him as sons, and always in attendance on him. As the father of their souls and their master, now worn out with years, he entreated them to bring the fathers to acquiesce in his decision. They undertook the difficult task and succeeded. They began by obtaining the Pope's consent, and then assembling the whole congregation in Philip's presence on the 7th July 1593, they addressed them in these words: "Father Philip entreats you through us that you would now at length condescend to satisfy his desire of quiet and repose, and allow him in the evening of his life to disburden himself of the office of Superior. Not on this account will he ever cease to be your most loving father, and to help you all with his prayers before God. He desires, always premising that it be your pleasure, that you should choose in his place F. Cesare Baronio, the oldest father of the congregation, and the first of his spiritual sons. His Blessedness the Pope, on our report, assents that F. Philip be relieved from his office, and that F. Cesare Baronio be chosen in his stead." The fathers listened to this address with deep emotion, and Baronio was the first to break the silence. He said it grieved him much that Father Philip could not get this notion out of his head, but that since he could not, and since the two illustrious Cardinals and the Pope himself approved and urged his request, he did not now feel so free to oppose it as he had at first. If, he went on to say, we accept the resignation Father Philip so much longs to offer, we shall be enabled to give him, in the sacrifice we make, another and a decisive proof of our loving devotion to him. Of the choice of a new superior we

will speak hereafter, for it is not seemly that a matter so important should be decided lightly. The fathers all concurred with Baronio in his judgment, but said they wished to choose him their superior there and then. This Baronio would not permit; he told the Cardinals that he would never consent to be superior of the House unless time had been given to the electors for reflexion, and unless their choice were left them absolutely free, according to the rule of the congregation. He concluded by saying he was sure the Pope himself, if he knew the statutes of the community, would not wish it otherwise. Having succeeded in the substance of their commission, the Cardinals assented to the delay requested before proceeding to the election of a new superior, and Philip resigned himself to bear a few days longer the burden of command. After this meeting the fathers of Rome wrote to those of Naples, informing them of what had been done, and of the decree to proceed to a fresh election. They urged them to pray for its success, and to send at once to Rome the fathers who had the right of voting; if none of them would come, they were to send their opinions and their votes in writing. In their reply the Naples fathers expressed their grief and pain at F. Philip's resignation, and their resolve to leave the matter in the hands of their brothers of Rome; the season, they said, was now too far advanced for so long a journey, and they declared beforehand their concurrence in the choice that might be made in Rome. On the 23rd July 1593 the fathers of the Vallicella met in general congregation, with Philip for the last time at their head. The letter from the fathers of Naples was first unsealed and read; and by the unanimous vote of both Houses, F. Cesare Baronio was elected Superior for three years.

This election gladdened the hearts of all, and Philip declared that he could now die in peace, since he left the government of his beloved Congregation in the hands of Baronio. The new Superior alone did not share the general joy, and we are told that when informed of the result of the election he wept aloud. He began his first letter to the Congregation of Naples with these words: *my harp is turned to mourning: for I have received of the hands of the Lord double for all my sins.* And it was noted that when the fathers went up one by one, as the rule prescribes, to kiss the hand of the new Superior, Baronio sent them to kiss first the hand of S. Philip.

Thus set free from the cares of government, it was easy for Philip to live the life of retirement and contemplation he longed for. He was almost always in his little room at the Vallicella, and most commonly absorbed in prayer. He still heard the confessions of his beloved disciples, and gave them the guidance and direction they needed, nor did he exclude the many friends who had for so many years found delight in conversing with him. There was outwardly but little change; but it was easy to see that his soul was more collected within itself, and the thought of Paradise more real and more abiding. Even the purest and most innocent pleasures of life lost by degrees all charm for him, and his eye was fixed with longing on the promise of the dawn of the everlasting light.

Let us try to picture him to ourselves as he sits in his little room at the Vallicella, now the pilgrimage of his sons from afar. He is old, and there are traces of frequent infirmity about him, but neither years nor sicknesses have taken the youthfulness and the vigour from his heart. The pure and harmonious lines of his

countenance are unchanged, and his small blue eyes are keen and flashing as ever. He is of middle height; his forehead high and ample, his nose aquiline, his beard and scanty hair are white as snow. Time has traced some wrinkles on his face, but it has left untouched the sweetness of his expression, and the speaking smile on his lips. In all his movements we note a graceful blending of dignity with humility; and his words, though now more slowly spoken, are still soft and thrilling and full of charm. F. Giovenale says of him: "He is a beautiful old man, and white as an ermine; his flesh is soft and exquisitely pure, so that, if he holds his hand against the light, it seems transparent as alabaster." He is simply dressed; his cassock is of the rough-grained serge of Gubbio, and his stockings of the same; his shirt of common linen, neither coarse nor fine, and he has no wristbands, such as were then generally worn. His shoes are stout and large, and he often wears some that he asked as alms of Cardinal Alessandrino. His collar is large and conspicuous; and, while he shuns the very appearance of luxury and refinement in dress, he shuns with equal care everything that might seem singular, and give him the air and look of a saint. It had been the effort of his whole life to be a saint, without appearing to be one. Though often sick and infirm he is scrupulously clean and tidy, and he was fond of repeating the words of S. Bernard: "Poverty has always pleased me, dirt never." Indeed, this love of cleanliness was, in his earlier years, almost excessive. For some time he could not bring himself to say mass with a chalice used by other priests, until, by persevering effort, he overcame this repugnance. And so for many years he used a drinking cup of his own, made of coarse glass, and worth

a *bajocco ;* but he one day gave this cup to F. Antonio Lucci without any apparent motive. When F. Antonio asked him what he was to do with it, Philip said that up to that day he had used that cup, because he could not bear to drink out of those which were used by others; but that he had at length conquered that feeling, and wished now for nothing singular and apart from others.[1]

His room was somewhat better furnished than when he was at the Caccia's or at S. Girolamo, but was still poor and bare. The bed was very plain, with two mattresses; and, in his later years, a curtain of cloth was drawn around it; the few articles of furniture, simple and inexpensive, and only such as were absolutely necessary; nothing rich or bright, nothing for ease and comfort alone. He had given nearly all his books to the Library; but on his table might still be seen the Holy Scriptures and the Imitation, the Lives of S. Catherine of Siena and the Blessed Colombini, Louis of Granada, and a few others; and these, especially the lives of the saints, so affected him as he read that he could not go on for weeping. Besides these there were one or two books of fables and amusing stories, and we have seen the use he made of these. The love of poverty he felt when still a youth at S. Germano had grown with years, so that he was ever seeking ways of gratifying it. When he ceased to be Superior he made Gallonio suggest to Cardinals Cusano and Borromeo to send him daily as an alms, the one, a small loaf of bread, and the other, a flask of common wine with one or two eggs; and, when the Cardinal of Montalto came to know

[1] This cup was carried in procession in the city of Cracow, to celebrate the canonization of our saint, and it is still preserved there in a rich reliquary of silver. In this notice of it I have followed Marciano and Sonzonio; Bacci's account is slightly different.

of this arrangement, he asked to be allowed to show his devotion to Philip, by joining in supplying him with the little wine he drank. One day F. Francesco Bozio was in the saint's room when his daily provision arrived, and, as he looked somewhat surprised, Philip said to him: "My Francesco, do not take this amiss. I am preparing myself for death; I have detached my heart from all else; I wish to live and die in poverty, and so I live on this alms."

This had been, in truth, Philip's mode of life from his youth. He very rarely ate fish, meat more rarely still, and he had always abstained from milk and cheese and all that is called *lacticinia*. Of the food he permitted himself he ate so little that his physicians deemed it altogether insufficient to sustain life, and it was believed that he reached extreme old age, rather by the virtue of the Holy Eucharist, than by that of natural food.[1] Of this little supply he invariably set apart a portion for the poor. He ate alone in his own room; he allowed no one to lay his table or wait on him, and indeed, he generally took his meals standing. From the time when he came to live at the Vallicella, and more especially during the last two years of his life, he seldom made his appearance at the common table, that his extreme abstinence might not appear singular. From time to time, however, he dined with the fathers, or with some especially dear friend, or he would gather some of his more intimate disciples to dinner or supper; and on these occasions it was

[1] In the Bull of the saint's canonization we read: "He invariably abstained from every kind of *lacticinia*. He tasted fish rarely, and meat very rarely indeed. He drank little, and more water than wine. He ate and drank so sparingly that the physicians averred that the food he took was not sufficient to sustain life. It was believed by those about him that his life was prolonged to old age mainly by the virtue of the Holy Eucharist."

observed that he made the greatest efforts to avoid every appearance of singularity. He always led the conversation quietly and unaffectedly to some matter connected with the spiritual life, and this is the origin of what is prescribed in the Rule: "At table after the reading, one of the priests in turn proposes some text of Holy Scripture, or some point of moral theology, or some maxim of the spiritual life, or some case of conscience, on which there may be room for doubt or question. And if any father should not answer, or should leave the point to the decision of the others, this is among us ascribed to modesty rather than to ignorance." Whenever Philip was ordered by his physicians to take more delicate and nourishing food he obeyed, but with great effort, and with many protests that this change in his mode of life did him harm rather than good. Towards the close of his life his abstinence was so great that often, when he was reminded after his mass that he had not taken his usual breakfast, he would answer: "What breakfast, my dear ones? I have had my breakfast." At other times, when it was noticed that the food in his room remained untouched, he would answer those who tried to induce him to eat with the words: "Ah yes, I had forgotten all about it."

As time went on, his fervour in prayer became so great that even in uttering one of his favourite ejaculations, those ejaculations which he recommended to all his disciples with such earnestness, he would tremble all over, his heart would beat impetuously, and he would pass into an ecstasy. The sight of a relic of any saint, or a religious picture, or a crucifix, or even the hearing any devout expression, would fill his eyes with tears. He prayed, not only in the

church and at Oratory, and in the little room he had fitted up for himself at the top of the house, but in the street while he was walking, or in his room when it was full of visitors; and he loved to pray in the evening after the *Ave Maria*, with a light so covered that it did not fall on his eyes, but only on the crucifix. During any serious deliberation he would pray at greater length and with increased fervour; and it may be said with truth that during his last two years he lived in almost continuous prayer. To this period of his life, too, we may refer those beautiful words of his which have been preserved for us by his biographers: "A man who is truly enamoured of God comes at length into such a state that he is constrained to say—Lord, let me take some sleep!" Throughout his life he had never given more than five hours to sleep; the rest of the night he spent in prayer. Sometimes he passed the whole night in prayer and watching, to make up, as he said, for the prayers he could not say during the day. As he grew older his sons entreated him to consider his age and to take more sleep; but he persisted in rising at his usual early hour, and kept near his bed a small crucifix and a rosary, to be at hand if he should wake during the night. His answer to all remonstrances was: "Do you not know, my sons, that this is not a time for sleep? believe me, Paradise was not made for sluggards."

Nor were his extreme age and his frequent infirmity allowed to interfere with his habits of self-discipline and bodily austerity. He had, indeed, acquired by long use the fullest mastery over his lower nature, yet he never laid aside the means which had helped him to acquire it. Two years before his death he feared

that one of his penitents was labouring under some delusion, and said to him with tears: "Know, my son, that I will take many disciplines for you, old as I am." And Marcello Ferro relates, in the processes of the saint's canonization, that he had often remonstrated with him on his using in his old age disciplines made of such heavy chains, and that Philip always managed to change the conversation.

While, however, he seemed to be living a life of perfect seclusion in his little room, his loving care extended still to all around him; the charity which had been the habit and the passion of his life urged him to the end in spite of himself. Thus, Baronio felt such reverence for Philip, and was so humble and so diffident of himself, that he consulted the saint on all the affairs of the Congregation, and he thus still bore a large part of the burden he had proposed to lay down. He would never express a wish to be left alone, though his weakness often made the presence of others wearisome to him, and he was yearning for time to pray. He had long given up preaching in the church, because he said he felt himself incapable of doing so, but really because he could no longer speak of the things of God, without weeping, and causing a too violent movement of his heart. And, therefore, he spoke the more readily and earnestly in his own room, so that very many were led to give themselves with firmer resolve to the spiritual life and the service of God. And he generally concluded his exhortations with words like these: "And what is there in the world that is truly good? Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity. Nothing in this world gives me pleasure; and this pleases me above all else, that I find nothing that pleases me." Words like these spoken with great energy by an old man whose course

was nearly run, and whose countenance was lighted up with the love of God, sank deep into the hearts of those who heard them, and produced wonderful effects. He would say to the fathers of his Oratory: "Believe me, my sons, it is not I who have founded this Congregation, but God; for, I assure you, I never of myself had a thought of the kind. This congregation," he added sometimes, "Mary most holy founded it." One day a person said to him that he ought to pray as S. Martin did: "Lord, if I am necessary to Thy people I shrink not from toil;" but Philip answered immediately: "No, no; God keep me from saying a prayer like that! And who am I that I should presume so far? What do you mean? that an insignificant creature like me can help the souls redeemed with the blood of Christ!" He was very frequent at confession, and would weep and lament to Baronio, his confessor, that he who was such a great sinner should be held in such esteem. One day he said to him: "I have prayed the Lord without ceasing that He would be pleased not to work miracles through me; and if there have been any, they are to be ascribed, under God, not to me but to the faith of those in whose behalf He has vouchsafed them." Baronio never contradicted him, but rather approved these humble assurances, and treasured them in his heart for his own instruction. During these closing years of his life Philip opened his heart with great freedom and affection to Cardinals Cusano and Frederic Borromeo; the latter of these great men deposed in the processes that the saint had told him that many of his disciples and other spiritual persons had appeared to him after their death, and he spoke of these visions as of common occurrence.

Such was Philip's interior life during the last two

years of his pilgrimage on earth; but he sometimes, though seldom, left his little room, and was seen in the streets of Rome. His constant companion was F. Consolini, and sometimes he would take with him another father of the congregation. On these occasions many young men who loved our saint and took delight in his conversation would accompany him, and for each he had some kind and cheerful word. Old as he was, he became young again with these beloved youths, and while his conversation was always of God and of spiritual things, there was in it still a vein of pleasantry and genial mirth. He loved the young to the last with a peculiar love; he laid himself out to draw them towards God, and he strove to keep them always bright and glad and cheerful in His service.

When he went out it was either to see the Pope, who very often sent for him, or to visit some one who was sick. It seemed as if he were called now in his old age only to those on whom God would bestow some signal blessing, for these visits were marked by unusual graces and by many miracles, and four of those mentioned by Gallonio are worthy of especial record.

Patrizio Patrizi, a Roman noble, was ill, and although his indisposition was regarded as slight, he expressed a great wish to see Philip, in whose prayers he had unbounded confidence. Philip came, and saw at once, by a supernatural light, that notwithstanding the assurances of his physicians, it was not the will of God that Patrizio should recover, and that his end was near. He therefore urged him to prepare to receive the sacraments of the Church, and assured him that in any case they would do him great good. Patrizio was much surprised at this urgency, and said that he would

rather defer receiving the sacraments, because the physicians had assured him he was not in any danger. Still Philip insisted, until at length Patrizio consented and received the last sacraments with great devotion. Very soon afterwards he passed quite unexpectedly from this life. A similar and very touching death was that of another Roman noble, Virgilio Crescenzi, which took place in this same year. A Roman lady, Antonia Caraccia, was seized with an acute pain in the side soon after her confinement; this pain increased so rapidly and was accompanied with so much fever that she lay prostrate, and unable to turn in her bed. When she had continued in this state for a fortnight, and no remedies had given her any relief, her husband went to Philip, and commended her to his prayers. Philip then went to see her, and said at once to her husband: "Make your mind quite easy, for your wife will not die of this illness." Still she grew worse day by day. Her stomach rejected all food, and she could not sleep. After a while the husband went again to Philip, and entreated him to visit his wife once more, for that her state was now desperate, and nothing but Philip's presence would give her any relief. Philip answered again: "Your wife will not die, I tell you; she will recover her health. But go your way home, and I will follow you presently." Old and feeble as he was, Philip went again to see Antonia, and on entering her room he said to her: "Now tell me, my daughter, what is the matter with you? where do you feel the pain?" She pointed to her right side, and then Philip laid his blessed hand on the spot, and made on it the sign of the cross. At his touch her soul was first filled with a marvellous gladness and joy, and Philip, seeing

that the Lord had heard his prayer, went away quickly, saying only these words: "and now, my daughter, be of good cheer, and have no further fear." And as he left the room, Antonia tried to move herself, and found to her unutterable amazement that she was perfectly cured. Both she and her husband attested this miracle on oath in the process of the saint's canonization.

About this time the Patriarch of Alexandria sent to Rome an archdeacon, whose name was Barsum, to treat of the closer union of the Church of Alexandria with that of Rome. It was a matter of very great importance, and one which would naturally gladden the heart of our saint. Barsum heard so much of Philip's sanctity that he expressed a wish to assist at his mass and receive Holy Communion at his hand, and Nero del Nero took him one morning to the Vallicella for that purpose. Philip felt how useful to the Church the mission of Barsum was, and prayed for him with such devotion that he began to tremble violently, and when he was administering holy communion his hand shook so much that Nero took hold of his arm to steady it. When they went to take leave of the saint he said: "I was rather too much excited this morning, was I not?" and then he said no more. Not very long after this the archdeacon was seized with a very serious illness; he suffered from hectic fever, with violent cough, spitting of blood, difficulty of breathing, and sleeplessness, and the physicians despaired of his recovery. Thereupon his friend Girolamo Vecchietti, who had accompanied him from Egypt to Rome, went in great affliction to Philip; he found the saint just vesting for mass, and entreated him to pray for Barsum in his extreme danger. Philip promised to do so, and it was observed that while he was saying mass the archdeacon fell into a

quiet slumber which lasted for several hours. When he had finished mass, Philip said, with his wonted simplicity and confidence: "Barsum will not die this time." Shortly after he sent to bid the sick man come to him, and although he was so ill that he could not sit up in bed without support, he rose and was taken to Philip's room in a carriage. When Philip saw him coming he rose and advanced to meet him, threw his arms around his neck and kissed him, and pressed him to his heart with great tenderness. He held him in this position for a short time, and the archdeacon felt himself revived and filled with vigour, as if he were quite well again; and he entreated the saint to continue to pray for him. On their way back Barsum said to his friend: "Girolamo, I am cured;" and on his return a second time to Rome he made especial mention of his miraculous cure in his oration to the Pope and the Sacred College.

These are but some of the wonders of these closing years of our saint's life. A certain parish-priest, named Lazarelli, was in great distress of mind about some temporal matter, and when Philip saw him he said to him, though he had never seen him before: "You are much troubled and tempted, are you not?" And when Lazarelli had told him all he had on his mind, Philip answered him: "Courage! I do not want you to be cast down; within a fortnight everything will come right.' And so it came to pass in a marvellous and quite unexpected manner. Philip went one day to see Girolamo Pamfilio, then auditor of the Rota, who was very seriously ill. He embraced him with tender affection, pressed his head with both his hands, and then said to him: "Now cheer up; you will not die of this illness, and in a few days you will be quite well again." He

soon recovered, and lived to be a Cardinal of Holy Church. He healed a child whose name was Caterina Ruissa with his touch, and told a penitent of his, Vittoria Cibo, that her sister, who was a nun in the Tor di Specchi and in perfect health, would die within a few days. And so it was.

And now we must narrate one of the most beautiful and touching events in the life of our saint, an event attested in the processes by fourteen sworn witnesses, and recorded by Gallonio, who was himself present, and tells us what he saw and heard. Philip, full of years and of merits, was drawing on towards the time when he was to receive the crown of eternal life. A year before his death, in the month of April 1594, he had an attack of intermittent fever which lasted for twenty-five days. It was probably during this illness that he wrote to his niece Anna Tregui, in S. Lucia at Florence, these simple words: "There is no surer and shorter way to acquire the love of God than to detach ourselves from the things of this world, desiring rather the will of God and His glory in us than our own will and content." On the twenty-fifth day the fever abated, and all around him consoled themselves with the hope of his speedy recovery. But in the month of May he was seized with pains in his loins so acute and continuous that he could find no rest or relief; his pulse was almost gone, he could not take food, nor could he speak so as to be understood. His peace of soul was, however, unruffled, and his cheerfulness undimmed; he uttered no word of complaint, made no movement of restlessness, but kept saying repeatedly in a low voice: "Give me, Lord, increase of suffering, but give me increase of patience too." He continued in great agony a whole day, and about three hours

before the *Ave Maria*, Angelo Bagnorea and Ridolfo Silvestri, his physicians, came to see him. They felt his pulse, and then declared that he could not now last much longer; and the whole house was filled with lamentation and weeping. The physicians then looked at him, closed the curtains around him, and began to talk in a subdued tone with the fathers and other spiritual children of the saint who were in the room; and thus they awaited with unutterable anguish of soul the now approaching end.

While they were thus standing silent and attent, Philip cried out with a voice of startling loudness: "He who desires anything but God deceives himself utterly! He who loves aught else but God errs miserably!" And then, after a brief pause, he continued: "Ah, my *Madonna santissima*, my beautiful Madonna, my blessed Madonna!" And he said these words with such feeling and such vehemence of spirit that the whole bed trembled. The physicians ran to the bed when they heard his voice, and drew the curtain quickly back, and all who were in the room then saw the holy father with his hands uplifted, and his whole body raised nearly a foot from the bed; he was stretching out his arms and closing them again, as though he were embracing some one with great affection; and then he repeated the same words, and with many tears: "No, I am not worthy! Who am I, O my dear Madonna, that thou shouldest come to see me! O Virgin most beautiful and most pure, I do not deserve a grace so great! Ah, why art thou come to me, the least and lowest of thy servants! Who am I? O holiest Virgin! O Mother of God! O thou blessed amongst women!" All those who stood by were filled with amazement and awe; some wept with emotion, others shrank

back in dread, though none saw anything, and all looked fixedly at the saint thus raised from the bed, wondering how it would end. Philip remained thus for a considerable time, weeping abundantly, and invoking our blessed Lady. The physicians at length interrupted him by asking him what was the matter with him, and instantly Philip sank back upon his bed and answered: "Did you not then see the Mother of God come to visit me, and to take away all my pains?" When he had said this he seemed to recollect himself and looked about him; and when he saw so many persons present, he hurriedly threw the sheet over his head and burst into a flood of tears. And thus he continued for some time until the physicians, fearing that such vehement weeping might be hurtful to him, said: "No more, father, no more." The saint then spoke to them openly, and with a bright and joyous countenance: "I do not need you any longer now; the *Madonna santissima* has come to me and cured me." On hearing these words they felt his pulse, and to their great amazement found him healed and in perfect health.

When Philip had come fully to himself after this heavenly vision, he grieved greatly that he had unconsciously revealed to others the supernatural gift of God; and as he could not now recall his words he implored all present, and especially the physicians, not to speak of what had taken place. But they could not keep silence; they related the miracle to many persons, and Angelo da Bagnorea at once wrote a minute account of it. It soon came to the ears of Cardinals Cusano and Borromeo, and they went at once to see Philip and to share his joy. The saint tried at first to turn the conversation to something

else; but he could not long resist the loving entreaties of these his dearest disciples, and ended by relating to them the whole vision exactly as it had taken place. And then Cardinal Borromeo, knowing the interest the Pope would take in Philip's recovery, and the consolation he would derive from an intervention on his behalf so gracious, wrote a full account of it and sent it that same evening to his Holiness.

We know not what were the abiding effects of this vision on Philip's soul; it doubtless gave renewed ardour to his love of God, and was to him a foretaste and a pledge of the blessedness that awaited him. But we are told that he did nothing else that evening but impress on his disciples a great love and a great devotion towards the most holy Virgin. "Be sure of this, my sons," he said again and again, "believe me, for I know it well, there is no more effectual means of obtaining graces from God than the most holy Madonna." And he urged them all to say to her that evening with the greatest love and trust: "Virgin Mother of God, pray to Jesus for me!"

This sweet vision of the Madonna, which so brightened the last year of Philip's life, does not stand apart and alone; Bacci and his other biographers amaze us by the many they record. Thus, while he was praying fervently one Christmas night he was rapt as into paradise by a vision of Jesus in the form of an Infant. Again and again at Mass, it pleased God to show him some ray of His divine glory. Sometimes he saw and overcame the devil in visible shape; and it was almost habitual to him to see the souls of those he loved as they parted from the body, and to be assured of their salvation, and of the greater or less perfection of their beauty.

It is very much to be noted, however, that while he was himself so often cheered by heavenly visions, he attached no importance to them, and was very slow to believe in their reality. He even seemed to carry this reluctance to an excess; but his large and ripe experience had shown him the power of an excited or disordered imagination, and the peril of deceit. He would say, for instance, that visions are full of danger; that we must not, as a general rule, give heed to them; that they may lead to pride and vain glory; and that it was mere folly to put visions above patience, obedience, and humility. He bade two persons, one of whom was a sister of the third order of S. Dominic, who told him that they saw our blessed Lady, to spit in her face when they saw her again; and then they would see that it was only an illusion. He did not believe much in the visions of women; and he exhorted confessors to attach no importance to the fancied raptures of their penitents, because they may feel great fervour for a time, and then it may all come to nothing. One day, F. Francesco Bordini preached a sermon in the Oratory on ecstasies. When he had ended his sermon Philip went up into the pulpit and said, that as that father had been speaking of ecstasies he wished to add one word. "I know a woman," he continued, "of very holy life, who formerly had frequent ecstasies; they lasted for a considerable time, and then God withdrew them. Now, when do you think I esteemed that woman most? when she had the ecstasies, or when she no longer had them? Well, let me tell you that she seemed to me beyond all comparison more worthy of esteem when she had no ecstasies than when she used to have them." And without

another word he came down from the pulpit and went away.

It is a striking thought that God should have made use of a saint whose whole life was so rich in prophecies, miracles, ecstasies, and visions, to discredit that fanciful and often hurtful school of mysticism which overlooks mortification, humility, and patience, in its love of dreams and imaginations. In the latter half of the sixteenth century, there was a natural reaction from the protestant denial of miracles and prophecies in the Church; and thus Philip's sobriety of judgment and his singular moderation helped greatly to form in Christian people a calm and reverent state of mind, neither hastily and everywhere affirming the supernatural, nor rashly and always denying it.

CHAPTER XVIII.

S. PHILIP AND HENRY IV. OF FRANCE—THE ORATORY IN FRANCE.

THE reader will have remarked that, while I have spoken much of the Popes of S. Philip's time, I have said little or nothing of the political aspect of their reigns. And yet the political life of the Holy See is always worthy of grave consideration, because we find in it, amidst the shock and conflict of human passions, the lofty and comprehensive idea of religion. We owe it to the Papacy that religious principles and ideas now pervade all civil and political life, so that we cannot treat any great question without reference, either direct or indirect, to religion. The Papacy has proclaimed the great law that all social life must be ordered by religion, although the application of that law has been in all ages limited, if not frustrated, by the corruption and the waywardness of men. In the sixteenth century more especially, when the Church found itself in every country confronted by the protestant revolt, the policy of the Holy See was of necessity influenced by considerations of religion, and its difficulties were in proportion to the grandeur of the interests at stake.

Until the close of his long life S. Philip took no part or interest in politics. He exercised in Rome an apostolate of gentleness and charity which raised men's hearts to God, and put all passing interests of earth in

their due relations with eternity; and he thus fitted them for a political life at once healthy and wise, because guided by the light of religion and truth and justice. He advanced the true interests of Christendom by his fervent and constant prayers for the needs of Holy Church, which are so inseparably bound up with the needs and interests of all its separate nations; and when the Pope had to decide questions of more than ordinary gravity, his prayers were more urgent still, and unceasing. From time to time his counsel was sought either by the Popes or the members of the Sacred College, and he gave it with his wonted prudence. His biographers have said nothing of this side of our saint's life; they had other and higher ends in view, and it was too closely veiled by his humility and modesty. There was, however, one great question at the close of the sixteenth century in which Philip took a very active and decisive part; a question the most momentous perhaps, and difficult the Church had at that time to decide, involving as it did political as well as religious interests of the highest order. It was a question so complicated that it divided even Catholics the most distinguished for learning and piety, and it was in the end decided as Philip wished, and mainly through his influence.

This question involved the succession to the crown of France. In 1585, ten years before S. Philip's death, that crown was worn by Henry III., a Catholic by profession, but of dissolute life and feeble intellect. He had no son, and therefore he, the last of the Valois, would, according to the French law of succession, be succeeded on the throne by another Henry, the first of the Bourbons. But this Henry of Bourbon, king of Navarre, was a Calvinist. He had been carefully imbued with this heresy by his mother, and confirmed in

it by the Prince de Condé and the Admiral de Coligny, who were its ardent partizans. He was, moreover, a relapsed heretic; he had become a Catholic in order to save his life during the massacre of S. Bartholomew, and had again apostatized in 1576, when the Calvinists were flushed with the hope of success in their struggle for the mastery of France. Now the Catholics of France shuddered at the thought of a heretic king, the sworn enemy of their ancestral religion, and formed themselves into a league to devise means to avert this calamity. Among the leaders of this league were the duke of Guise, Cardinal Charles of Bourbon, and many other nobles of high name and great influence. The Pope naturally favoured this movement of legitimate self-defence in the interest of religion, and it was supported by Spain from motives in which religious feeling was mingled with dreams of political ambition. As the object of the League was to ensure that on the death of Henry III. a Catholic prince should wear the crown of France, it might have been expected that the king, himself a Catholic, would have sympathized with its efforts and given it his protection. But Henry and the League were divided by distrust of each other, and in the terrible struggle which ensued we find arrayed against the League not only the Calvinists, but a large body of Catholics too.

This war soon involved the whole of France; its vicissitudes were many, and its crimes appalling; and amidst them all the conduct of Henry III. was weak, vacillating, without plan, or principle, or resource. After their great defeat at Coutras the wrath of the League could no longer be restrained; they summoned to the defence of Paris the duke of Guise, whom the king had forbidden to enter the capital; they armed

the citizens, barricaded the streets to stop the advance of the King of Navarre, and drove Henry from Paris as his suspected ally.

Sixtus V. had done all in his power to appease the contending parties in France, and to secure to it the heritage of its faith; and at this juncture he ordered prayers in form of a Jubilee to be made for it in the churches of Rome. S. Philip's confidence in the power of prayer was boundless; and as the Vallicella was one of the churches in which the indulgences of the Jubilee might be gained, the prescribed prayers were offered in it with great solemnity and fervour. In a letter from F. Germanico Fedeli to Tarugi, written on the 5th December 1587, we read: "the Jubilee of which I wrote to your Paternity last week has made such a stir in Rome, that there was nothing like it even in the Holy Year itself. The weather is very bad, with incessant rain, and the streets are well nigh impassable; yet in the churches in which the *quarant' ore* are celebrated there are such crowds of people all day long that one can hardly get in or out. Our church has had quite its full share, and no Easter has ever so exhausted the fathers who hear confessions. I speak within bounds when I say we had two thousand communicants last Sunday. At the high altar a priest in cotta was giving Communion for five hours, except the short time taken up by the sermon. No mass was said but by F. Philip, and that when the communions were over; and all this week we have had crowds of fresh communicants every day. God grant that distracted kingdom of France may reap the fruit of all this, and may receive those blessings, on account of which this Jubilee has been granted."[1]

[1] Manuscript letter in the archives of the Naples Oratory.

Still the prospects of France grew darker, and the efforts at mediation made by Sixtus V. were of no avail. Three parties were now laying waste the unhappy country in their struggle for mastery,—the weak and ill-compacted faction of Henry III.—the League—and the Calvinists, with Henry of Navarre at their head. After his flight from Paris, the King had invited the duke of Guise and his brother the Cardinal of Lorraine to discuss with him at Blois the state of affairs and the demands of the League, and had then planned and directed their assassination. This foul and dastardly crime alienated from Henry III. the hearts of the Catholics of France, and a decree of the Sorbonne pronounced that he had by it forfeited his crown. In his terror, the King listened to the overtures made to him by the Calvinists, and consented to a reconciliation with Henry of Navarre. With their united forces the two kings pressed on the siege of Paris with such vigour that the city was reduced to extremity and on the point of surrendering, when a fanatical Dominican friar, whose name was Jacques Clement, assassinated Henry III. on the 1st August 1589. But this crime brought no peace to France. A part of the army proclaimed Henry of Navarre, as being the next in order of succession to the throne, while the larger number of Catholics gave their allegiance to the Cardinal of Bourbon, under the title of Charles X., and civil discord blazed more fiercely than ever. Henry IV. found himself for the time too weak to continue the siege of Paris, and retired into Normandy; but after his great victories at Arques and Ivry, he marched again upon the capital, and had brought it to the verge of surrender, when an army of Spaniards, under the leadership of the duke of Parma,

compelled him again to raise the siege and make good his retreat. Meanwhile Cardinal Charles of Bourbon, the king proclaimed by the League, died in prison.

This was the state of affairs when Clement VIII. was elected Pope. The pacification of France was naturally the most pressing of his cares, and he took frequent counsel with S. Philip and Baronio on the means best adapted to effect that great object; and Baronio himself tells us that his own certainty of conviction rested on the judgment of our saint. Before Philip came to a decision on any matter of importance, he pondered it deeply, and prayed fervently and long; but when his decision was once made he never wavered or hesitated again, nor wearied in his efforts to give it effect. It was very natural that a Pope so pious as Clement VIII. should ask the opinion of a saint whom he had so long loved and venerated, and whom he wished to draw from his obscurity and employ in the more public service of the Church; and, moreover, the circumstances as well as the difficulties of the question made him desire to have the support in its decision of a saint so universally known and revered.

Even during the pontificate of Sixtus V., Henry of Navarre had intimated that he was not altogether indisposed to become a Catholic; and now that the question was forced on him again by the course of events, he resumed his inquiries and discussions. But still the Pope hesitated. Were he to receive Henry's abjuration, could he be sure that the king accepted the Catholic faith sincerely, and not simply to secure his crown? He had already become a Catholic when he deemed his life in danger, and had apostatized when the danger had passed away. And then, his friends, his ministers, his alliances, all his surroundings were

Calvinist. Many Catholics would be naturally indisposed to regard as sincere a conversion made at such a time. Spain was violently opposed to it, and on these accounts it seemed well to delay until the irritation of men's minds had calmed down. On the other hand, the Pope could not fail to see that the League had lost its original character, and was becoming a revolutionary power; that its members could not agree on the choice of a Catholic king, and that such a king when chosen would not be able to maintain himself long against one whose right of succession was unquestioned. The greatest difficulty of all was the ill-concealed ambition of Spain to place on the throne of France a creature and adherent of its own; for France was too sensitive to its dignity and honour as a nation to submit to the rule of a foreigner. These were the thoughts which perplexed the mind of the Pope, and induced him to wait and temporize, partly in hope that time and the course of events would bring a solution of the difficulty; partly that the strong opposition to Henry of Navarre might die away; and partly, too, that he might assure himself and the Church that the king's conversion was sincere.

In the year 1593 Henry took the matter into his own hands. He conferred with several bishops and learned men, and on the 25th July he publicly abjured the Calvinist heresy at S. Denis in presence of the archbishop of Bourges, nine bishops, and a large body of clergy. The papal legate had notified to the bishops of France that the absolution of a relapsed heretic was reserved to the Pope, and the archbishop consequently gave him absolution conditionally, *saving the authority of the Apostolic See*. Negotiations were then reopened with the Pope, but without any immediate result;

Clement VIII. could not lay aside his doubts of the king's sincerity, and the Spanish court used its utmost efforts to prevent the Pope from restoring him to the communion of the Church.

This was the state of affairs in regard of France when S. Philip was consulted. The Pope did not ask for his prayers alone, nor for his opinion; he urged him to give his counsel with the authority of a saint and a man of singular prudence, and to take part in all the attempts made to solve the difficulties of this grave and complicated question. Clement could not clearly see what was his duty to the Church; and the Spanish party, opposed to Henry's absolution, was very strong in Rome, and numbered in its ranks many cardinals and theologians of great name.

Philip's intervention in this great question is not mentioned by Gallonio, and is only incidentally referred to by Bacci; but Macchiarelli in his life of the saint says: "In the most important affair of the absolution of Henry IV., on which depended the peace of all Christendom, and which was strenuously resisted by many persons of great learning and influence, so that it was one of the most serious questions the court of Rome had ever decided, the great Pope, Clement VIII., would not come to a determination without knowing the opinion and judgment of Philip."[1] And in the life of Cardinal Morosini we read that S. Philip often said to him: "Be sure of this, that God will make use of the king Henry as the instrument of the purposes of His eternal Providence for the advantage of France and of the Catholic Church.[2] And the same writer

[1] Macchiarelli, *Ristretto della vita di S. Filippo.*

[2] *Vita del Card. Morosino,* by the Archbishop of Spoleto, lib. iv. cap. vii. 4.

goes on to say that one of the principal motives which at length induced the Pope to accept as sincere the abjuration of Henry IV. was the great authority of Philip's judgment, and the urgency with which he counselled it.

From the memoirs of the time we can trace that Philip treated, with great wisdom and tact, of this weighty question with the three great personages who were striving to obtain from the Pope the absolution of Henry IV. These were the duke of Nevers, Cardinal Gondi, and Cardinal Morosini; the two former, ambassadors at different times from the king to the Pope, and the third, a Venetian of whom his country is justly proud, and a very intimate friend of our saint.[1] Philip had great influence with Cardinal Morosini, and urged him to advocate the cause of Henry with all his power, the rather that he had been legate in France in the reign of Sixtus V., and knew the character of the French court and nation. Our saint had great confidence in the Cardinal's powers; he knew him to be learned and pious, and as a speaker so persuasive that none could resist the noble simplicity of his eloquence. The Pope too esteemed him highly, asked his opinion, and listened to him with pleasure.[2] Thus we read in a despatch of Paolo Paruta, the Venetian ambassador: "Cardinal Morosini has had another audience of his Holiness on this French business; and he told me that he spoke at much length and with great freedom, as he had done on all previous occasions; and that in this audience he had endeavoured to prove very clearly,

[1] Ciacconio says of Morosini: "*arctissimo necessitudinis vinculo astrictus fuit S. Philippo Nerio;*" he was bound to S. Philip Neri with ties of the closest intimacy.

[2] *Vita del Card. Morosino.* No one exerted himself more perseveringly in this matter.

not only the utility, but the necessity of absolving the king, if it were wished to save France from utter ruin, to the manifest detriment of all other sovereign princes, and especially of the Holy See."[1] In regard of the duke of Nevers and Cardinal Gondi, we know that they often discussed the absolution with Philip, and even in the presence of the Pope. In the manuscript life of the saint preserved at the Vallicella, and known to have been corrected by Baronio, it is said: "As the kingdom of France was torn by civil war, the question of the absolution of the King Henry was much discussed in the city of Rome. Now as the king had sent to Rome Cardinal Gondi, the duke of Nevers, and other great lords of the realm, to treat with the Pope of this matter, these ambassadors betook themselves to Philip; and Clement VIII. himself conferred with Philip on it, for it was in truth a question of very great gravity."[2] And again, in the chapter of the same life on the saint's *prudence and discernment of spirits*, we find these words: "The more than human prudence of Philip had been long known by manifold and striking proofs. As on all other occasions, so especially did he manifest it in the counsel he gave Pope Clement before he received back into the bosom of the Church Henry of Bourbon, King of Navarre, who claimed as of right the crown of France. There were sent at that time to Rome as royal ambassadors both Cardinal Gondi and the duke of Nevers, by means of whom the king urged his petition. And they, conferring often with Philip, and conducting the business according to his counsel, succeeded at length in obtaining from the Pope that

[1] Unpublished despatch in the archives of Venice.

[2] In the Vallicella Library. It was written in 1617; for the writer says that Paul V. had pronounced the beatification of our saint the year before.

the king should be received to grace, and so become qualified to be King of France." And it is said in the life of Henry IV. that he never forgot that *he had by that holy man been mightily aided to recover the grace from which heresy debarred him.*

When I wrote the first edition of this Life, I knew no more than I have set down of the direct relations of the duke of Nevers and S. Philip. I am now happy to be able to add some further details, taken from the letters of Giovanni Niccolini, ambassador from the court of Tuscany to the Pope while this great question was under discussion; for these letters I am indebted to the affectionate courtesy of my friend Cesare Guasti.

On reaching Rome the duke of Nevers saw that his opponent, the Spanish ambassador, the Duke of Sessa, had been beforehand with him in conciliating to his cause the favour of several theologians of various orders of religion. He thereupon addressed himself to the Jesuits, and to the General of the Franciscans of the Ara Cœli; but first of all, and very early in December, he went, by the advice of Monsignor Lomellini, to the Vallicella to confer with F. Philip, Baronio, and another father of the Oratory. This visit was made very secretly; the duke was charmed with Philip, and Philip with him. The saint, who knew the Pope's mind, thought that the duke had been sent to him by his Holiness, and received him with great cordiality and respect. He spoke to him, as was his wont, with affectionate frankness; and that same day he related to the Cardinal of Florence all that had passed, adding these words: "It seems to me that the Holy Spirit was with me while I was speaking, for I am quite pleased with my answer to Nevers."

He then went on to say that he had promised to see

the Pope as soon as possible, and to relate to his Holiness all his conversation with the duke. On this the Cardinal urged him to go at once, because the Pope was at that moment suffering slightly from gout, and so had time to enter calmly and seriously into the question. He advised him to tell the Pope how much the duke's manner had charmed him; and bade him insist on two points—the impolicy of disgusting by delays an ambassador so distinguished and so courteous, and the expediency of consulting the Cardinals on a matter of such grave import. The Cardinal knew well that more than twenty of the Sacred College favoured Henry's cause. Some thought that the king should at once apply for sacramental absolution; others urged that an affair of such importance should at least be discussed and decided without any needless delay. Philip then told his friend the Cardinal that, as the Pope refused to grant Henry an immediate and full absolution, he intended proposing to his Holiness to absolve him provisionally for a year. The king would thus have a strong inducement to persevere in good, and a reasonable hope of being fully absolved after that time of trial. Niccolini ends his first letter with these words: "The Cardinal of Florence told me that it was advisable that this counsel should be kept secret, lest the opponents of the king should find means of frustrating it. Anyhow, Father Philip is very warm in the matter, and the Cardinal aforesaid has not failed to keep his zeal alive."

Still Philip had very great difficulty in fulfilling his mission to the holy Father. No question had ever more divided the members of the Sacred College. Even of those who were the intimate and devoted friends of our saint, some inclined to favour the absolution of

Henry, while others eagerly opposed it, and supported the Spanish faction in France. And hence, as soon as it was known in Rome that F. Philip had undertaken to speak to the Pope in favour of Henry, Cardinals Borromeo and Cusano, with the archbishop of Monreale and the bishop of Cassano, went to see him, and, says Niccolini, *gave him a good lecture, charging him on his conscience not to speak to the Pope on the affairs of France.* Philip esteemed his friends greatly; in his exceeding humility he always distrusted his own judgment; and he began to ask himself whether it would not be better to keep silence, and commend the matter to God. But Baronio and F. Tommaso Bozio came to his aid. Both were very dear to him, and he knew them to be profoundly versed in theology and in the history of the Church. They urged him not to listen to the words of any man, but to speak out boldly whatever his conscience bade him speak in favour of the King of France. Their counsels overcame the saint's diffidence, and he pleaded the cause of Henry IV. with Pope Clement with his wonted courage and decision.

From Niccolini's letter it is clear that the Pope listened with great affection to the earnest words of the saint, who was, moreover, his friend. Philip urged most strongly that the negotiations should not be suspended; and that in a matter on which depended the salvation of a kingdom such as France, the opinions of the Cardinals should be asked. We cannot gather from Niccolini's letters what answer the Pope made, and there is some discrepancy in the accounts given him of it by Monsignor Lomellini and by the Cardinal of Florence. But if we bear in mind that the Pope believed that it was his policy to temporize and evade a decision, we

can understand that, while he gladly listened to Philip's pleading on behalf of Henry, he would not compromise himself by any clear and precise answer. He doubtless answered Philip, as he was wont to answer others, that he feared Henry's conversion was insincere, that he could not as yet see his way to trust him, and the like. Thus he gained time, and at length, as we shall see, reached his end with an almost infinite patience.[1]

Philip, moreover, employed in this great cause his unbounded influence with Baronio, who was not only his most affectionately devoted and obedient son, but who knew that Philip was a man of wonderful prudence, capable of giving sure counsel in the most difficult and complicated matters, and, above all, supernaturally enlightened by God. He would never have ventured to resist Philip's will; he regarded his words as utterances of the spirit of prophecy; and we can imagine the zeal with which he advocated a cause which he judged in itself righteous and good, and which Philip furthered with such ardour. And, indeed, Philip could not have employed any means better fitted to enlighten the conscience and decide the will of Clement VIII. His own great age, his frequent infirmities, and his shrinking modesty itself, prevented him from going to see the Pope as often as he felt necessary; whereas Baronio was the Pope's confessor, was with him every evening, and was regarded in Rome and throughout Europe as a man without rival in learning and supreme in authority. Baronio was Philip's champion and ally against the overweening Spanish influence.

Baronio had felt the grave difficulties of the affairs of France, and, like his father and master, S. Philip, had

[1] *Archivio di Stato in Firenze. Archivio Mediceo. Lettere da Roma dell' ambasciatore Gio. Niccolini.*

prayed with renewed fervour for guidance and light; he had also, as was his wont in times of public distress, redoubled his works of penance. He then studied and mastered the matter in dispute, and discussed it with S. Philip, and concluded that only the prompt reconciliation of Henry with the Church would raise religion from its fallen state in France, and put an end to civil discord. Baronio had learned to treat ecclesiastical questions without much deference to worldly policy, the policy which looks only at what is expedient or useful at the moment. There are minds whose natural tendency is to look at events in the light of fixed and absolute principles, rather than in the changing requirements of this science of the world; and the true and highest policy is that which recognizes those principles frankly and grasps them firmly, while in applying them it has due regard to the actual state of men and things. When once Baronio had arrived at this full conviction, he not only spoke to the Pope with great freedom, but gave him no rest until he shared it. Barnabei tells us in his Life of Baronio, that, "strengthened by the command of Philip, he cast himself at the Pope's feet and pleaded the cause of Henry, simply and exclusively as a case of conscience, to be decided by the unchanging principles of right and justice, without regard to any other interests than those of religion, the Church, and the salvation of souls." Baronio's urgent advocacy of this cause was so well known in Rome, that it gave deep offence to the partizans of Spain, and he was warned that he risked even his life by his insistence on the absolution of Henry. But Baronio was a man of courage and decision, of the stamp of S. Philip, and formed in his school; and although he knew that there were fanatics who would not shrink from violence, his spirit

rose with the sense of danger. When cautioned by his friends he replied that he longed to give his life, not once only but a hundred times, for the peace of the Church and the salvation of souls; he was resolute and inflexible. And we know that his earnest advocacy of Henry's cause was the reason why the Court of Spain interposed to prevent his being elected Pope, when only one single vote more was needed. But we have seen that Baronio was a true son of S. Philip, and that to him all earthly and even ecclesiastical dignities were regarded as only burdens and sacrifices.

Baronio was so far from being intimidated by the threats muttered around him, that he drew up a statement of Henry's case, with a formidable array of reasons, historical and theological. In an unpublished despatch of Paolo Paruta, the Venetian ambassador, we read: "It is thought that the Pope will be very strongly influenced by the counsel just given him by Padre Baronio, author of that remarkable work, the Ecclesiastical Annals, and at present confessor of his Holiness; for he has drawn up a statement addressed to his Holiness himself, but which has been passed from hand to hand, so that I have managed to read it. He handles this point principally, that the King of France may be heard in confession and received into the Church on his renewed repentance. And with many reasons and decrees of councils, and instances from history, he concludes that if that prince were to come to confess his sins, he not only might but ought to receive absolution; and that, although there are very many severe sentences uttered about those who have relapsed into heresy, the restraining and limiting the meaning of these is within the competency of the Pope. As to the objection that his conversion is only simulated, he says that we must

take our stand on the greater probability, it being a thing above all human power, and reserved to the divine wisdom, to read the inner secret of the heart of man. This opinion is generally received and much praised; but, on the other hand, the Spaniards are very zealous and active, and their theologians haunt the cardinals, suggesting fresh scruples and fresh difficulties, and still further complicating the question, for the decision of which solemn processions have been made in this city during the last fortnight." [1] In another despatch of the 5th August, Paruta repeats what he had before said; he speaks of a writing by the very learned Cardinal Toledo, who, although a Spaniard, pleads for Henry's absolution, and adds, that the good disposition of the Pope was daily more manifest. But Philip had so much at heart the welfare of France and the absolution of Henry, that he did not rest until, just before his death, he knew that the Pope had resolved on it in his own mind, and was delaying only in the hope of gaining over some of the sincere opponents of the king.

One day Philip, who was always so cautious and prudent in everything that concerned the Church, sent Baronio to tell the Pope to absolve the Bourbon, and that he himself would undertake to answer to God for it. This message affected the Pope greatly. If an old man like Philip, so near the judgment of God, was prepared to take on his own soul the responsibility of deciding a matter so grave and complicated, and to give an account for it to God, he must believe himself enlightened by God in his decision. In the margin of the manuscript life of our saint are these words: "The

[1] In the *Archivio dei Frari* at Venice. This despatch is dated 29th July 1595, two months after S. Philip's death, but it refers to previous events.

Blessed Philip charged Baronio, then confessor to the Pope, to tell his Holiness to grant absolution to the Bourbon king, and that he took upon his own soul the obligation of answering to God for this action. And this fact was stated by Baronio some years afterwards in a sermon he preached in our church on the feast of the *Beato*, in presence of many cardinals, among whom was the Signor Cardinal du Perron, so well known for his learning and eloquence ; and, when Baronio appealed to him to bear testimony to this fact, the said Cardinal rose, and, taking off his berretta, declared that what Baronio said was true." Still more decided and bold was another step taken by Philip to induce the Pope to grant this absolution without further delay. He ordered, or at least counselled, Baronio to do what would appear both rash and indiscreet, if we did not know how close were the ties of affection which bound together the Pope and Philip and Baronio. One day Baronio declared to Clement with great freedom and modesty, that he had resolved never more to hear his confession unless he would promise to grant his absolution to the King of France. The Pope well knew the wisdom as well as the sanctity of Baronio, and he felt that he would not have ventured on an act so daring without the counsel or the command of Philip, and received without displeasure the threatening words of his confessor. He gave the required promise, and Baronio continued to be his confessor ; but his apprehensions of the anger of the Spanish faction led him to temporize still. He was not sorry that all Rome should know the pressure exercised on him by S. Philip and Baronio, and he trusted that their influence might detach from the League its wiser and better adherents. And when, at length, after the death of our saint, he announced his decision, he

declared with perfect truth that his hesitation was due simply to his anxiety for the good of religion and the salvation of souls, and that he had not been consciously influenced by any considerations of worldly policy. In an unpublished despatch of Paruta we find that, on the Feast of the Nativity of our Lady, nine days before the absolution of the king, "the Pope went before daybreak, barefoot, and with a small number of attendants bearing torches, from his palace on Monte Cavallo to the Church of S. John Lateran, a distance of more than a mile. In that Church he visited the five privileged altars, prayed for a long time, said mass, and then ascended the *Scala Santa;* after which he went to the church of S. Maria Maggiore, where also he prayed at great length. He gave communion with his own hand to all his household attendants, and preached a very devout sermon, wherein, among other things, he exhorted them to pray for him to Almighty God, that He would vouchsafe to guide him by His holy inspiration in this matter of the King of France; and he said, moreover, that if, in the decision to which he had come, he had any other intent than the glory of God and the welfare of Christendom, he wished that his tongue might wither away, and that he might die."[1]

On the 17th September 1595, less than four months after our saint had entered into his rest, his longing desires in regard of France were satisfied. On that day the Vatican Basilica was adorned with great magnificence, and at its entrance the Pope received Cardinals du Perron and d'Ossat, the representatives and proxies of the King, and solemnly absolved him from all excommunication and censure, and restored him to the

[1] Despatch of the 9th September 1595, in the *Archivio dei Frari* at Venice.

unity and peace of the Church. There was great joy throughout Rome, and S. Philip must have rejoiced in his glory that the great work for which he had prayed and striven so long on earth was at length accomplished. Henry IV. was certainly not a saint, but he conferred great blessings on France, and on many occasions showed great favour to the Church and the Papacy. He was much beloved by S. Francis of Sales; and it is probable that these great saints, so alike in their tenderness and charity, favoured the cause of Henry, relapsed heretic as he was, not only for the sake of France, but because it seemed to them a grand and befitting thing that the Pope should, in so conspicuous an instance, remind men of the parable of the Good Shepherd, and invite all heretics to repentance and return. Henry always recognized his great obligations to the efforts and prayers of our saint, and was one of the most urgent and persevering in demanding his canonization. In the manuscript life so often quoted we read:—"Henry IV., the most christian King of France, who well remembered how mightily and efficaciously he had been aided by Philip in his efforts to recover the grace he had forfeited by heresy, wrought much, by means of his ambassadors, and even in his own person, that Philip should be solemnly numbered amongst the saints."[1]

It was very natural that the name of Philip should be loved and venerated by the generous nation for whose peace and welfare he had done so much; and hence the earliest offshoots of the Oratory out of Italy were seen in France. We have seen that the various

[1] On the part taken by S. Philip and Baronio, in regard of the absolution of Henry IV., see *Les luttes religieuses en France*, by the Vicomte de Meaux, p. 262 (Paris, 1879); and the Life of S. Philip, contributed by F. Theiner to the *Kirchen-Lexikon*, published at Freiburg. Also *Bernabei, Vita del Baronio*, lib. ii. ch. i.

congregations of secular priests formed in the seventeenth century were formed more or less on the type of the Oratory of S. Philip; and that his great conception of bringing secular priests to live in community, without vows or other bond than that of charity, was everywhere adopted, and to the great good of the Church. The three great and holy men whom God granted to France in that century, S. Francis of Sales, S. Vincent of Paul, and the Cardinal de Bérulle, all loved and studied the life of S. Philip and the rules of his Oratory, and followed in his steps. We have already seen that S. Francis established a house of the Oratory at Thonon, and was himself its Superior. In his Congregation of Priests of the Mission, S. Vincent of Paul founded a body of secular priests living in community, and under the same fundamental rules as the Oratory. The Cardinal de Bérulle proposed at first to adopt the whole rule of the Vallicella in his Oratory of Jesus: and although, on reflection, he modified it in some few points, to adapt it the better to the conditions and wants of France, its type was still the Oratory of Rome.[1] He strove with especial care to infuse into his Institute that warm and cordial charity which was the soul of the Oratory of S. Philip; and the two congregations resemble each other so closely that our saint, with his large and generous heart, would have had little hesitation in admitting the few changes in his rule made by the Cardinal.

It is certainly remarkable that in 1611, within fifteen years of S. Philip's death, and before his Institute had

[1] On the Oratory of Jesus, and the reasons which led Cardinal de Bérulle to modify to some extent S. Philip's rule, see the volume of the Cardinal's Life entitled, *Le père de Bérulle et l'Oratoire de Jésus*, by M. l'Abbé M. Houssaye, Paris, 1874, a work deservedly crowned by the French Academy.

spread far into Italy, there should arise in France a Congregation so vast and so celebrated as the Oratory of Cardinal de Bérulle. Within twenty years of its approval by the Holy See it numbered more than seventy houses, in all of which the spirit of our saint lived on. In his magnificent eulogy of the French Oratory, Bossuet seems to be drawing the portrait of the Vallicella, and speaks of S. Philip Neri as "that priest so transported with the love of God, whose zeal was so vast and comprehensive that the whole world was too small for the aspirations of his heart, even as his heart was too narrow for the immensity of his love." In these seventy houses it was seen that secular priests could live together with no other bond than charity, and attain to christian perfection, and labour with success for the salvation of souls. The French Oratory emulated and, perhaps, surpassed the Italian in the number of great and learned men it reckoned among its members; and yet we may regard as in some sort sons of S. Philip, Malebranche, Massillon, Thomassin, Morin, Lamy, Houbigant, and others, who were in their day the glory of the Oratory of Jesus. By degrees this Oratory spread its branches into Belgium and England, and even into our own Italy. It is to be deplored that the brightness of its glory was dimmed, at a later time, by the pestilent breath of Jansenism; but the errors and faults of a few of its sons should not lead us to forget the true grandeur and the merit of an institute so wide-spread and so beneficial. It was at length, with all the other religious orders, hurled to the ground by the French Revolution; and seventy years later, in 1852, it revived again through the zeal and efforts of F. Pététot.

Besides the great institute of the Cardinal de Bérulle,

and prior to it in date, there arose in France some smaller and less visible congregations of the Oratory, which were in all respects living branches of the Roman, and informed with its life. There is in Provence, at Cotignac near Draguignan, in the diocese of Fréjus, a sanctuary of Nôtre Dame des Grâces, which is held in singular veneration. A few French priests who served the church came to Rome in 1593, and were attracted towards Philip by the fame of his great sanctity, and also, perhaps, because they knew he loved France, and was labouring for its peace and welfare. The saint won their hearts; they studied the rules and spirit of his congregation, and resolved to transplant it into France. On their return they asked and obtained the consent of their bishop, and then founded and canonically erected the first house of French *Filippini*, in connexion with the sanctuary of N. D. des Grâces. They were in constant and cordial relations with S. Philip and the Roman congregation, and Baronio sent them a copy of his Annals as a token of brotherly love and oneness.

In course of time other houses of the Oratory were founded in Provence, among which we may mention those of Aix, Marseilles, Hyères, Toulon, and Grasse. These houses were at first regarded as one family, as were, for a time, the four Oratories of Rome, Naples, Sanseverino, and Lanciano. The splendour of the Oratory of Jesus, which was founded in the centre and capital of France, overpowered, without destroying, these smaller houses of *Filippini*. They had amongst them men greatly distinguished for virtue, learning, and genius; and the name of Antoine Yvan, a *Filippino* of N. D. des Grâces, is still beloved and revered throughout Provence.

The institute of S. Philip was shortly after this transplanted into Belgium; and it is observable that these foundations were made after the establishment of the Oratory of the Cardinal de Bérulle, so popular in France. The fame of Philip's gentle and wonderful sanctity was spreading daily, and many persons wished to follow the rules he had left at his death, without exception or change. Thus in 1622 was founded the house of Apremont, and then that of Douai, so celebrated for its great university; and in 1711 two others sprang up at Braine-le-Comte and Chièvres. These houses were at length swept away by the hurricane of the Revolution. But just as the Oratory of Cardinal de Bérulle was set up again in Paris in 1852, so in 1869 the Oratory of S. Philip appeared again at Draguignan, not far from the first house of N. D. des Grâces. A pious and learned priest, Jourdan de la Passandière, has revived there the congregation of the Oratory, and the gentle and loving spirit of S. Philip; and the fathers recall the glories of the early days of the Oratory by the zeal and success with which they exercise their apostolate in the country around them. Several cities of France wish to possess houses of *Filippini;* many bishops feel that the extension of the congregation would be a great blessing to the clergy and to France; and at Rennes and other towns of Brittany there are communities of priests who bear the name of S. Philip Neri, and long for the day when they may be transformed into true congregations of his Oratory. S. Philip and his institute are still young in the Church; in these times of perplexity priests feel more and more the need of living together in community, and of counterworking, in the spirit of S. Philip, the misbelief and the miserable confusions

around them. O that we who call ourselves his sons, had Philip's noble heart, and the divine fire with which it glowed!

Before concluding this chapter it will not be useless to mention another offshoot from the congregation of the Oratory. In the history of the Church, by the side of S. Benedict and his monks, we have S. Scholastica and her nuns; and together with S. Francis of Assisi and his friars, we find S. Clare and her sisters. Now S. Philip, who never thought of founding an order of monks or friars, was not likely to think of founding a community of women. But his burning charity, the very character of his teaching and direction, and the few rules he gave to his fathers, naturally attracted those pious women who longed to devote themselves to works of charity without the obligation of vows. And thus, that same impulse of love which unconsciously produced the fathers of the congregation of the Oratory, produced also a society of holy women, who took from their Blessed Father the name of *Filippine*, and were the precursors of that wonderful creation of the Church, the Sisters or Daughters of Charity.

In the first instance Philip founded, in conjunction with S. Ignatius, a community of women, called the Sisters of S. Caterina dei Funari. He then gathered together in different parts of Rome small groups of holy women who lived in community, and observed the evangelical counsels and the few rules given them by the saint, and whose life was thus the counterpart of that of the priests of S. Girolamo, S. John of the Florentines, and later on, of the Vallicella. They were bound together by charity, rather than by severe discipline and obedience; and their rule, like that

of the fathers, grew gradually up as the result of experience. And thus, when our saint fell asleep in the Lord, there were many groups of *Filippine*, such as the community of S. Caterina, and that over which presided Sister Orsola Benincasa, of whom we have already spoken.

But the *Filippine* did not assume the form of a true congregation until some years after the saint's death. Then two of his dearest disciples, Rutilio Brandi and Antonia Vela, exerted themselves to gather the scattered groups of *Filippine* into one house, near the church of S. Lucia, and immediately adjoining the palace of the *Incoronati*. While they were busied thus it pleased the Lord to gladden them both with a heavenly vision. S. Philip appeared to each of them separately on the same night; his countenance was beautiful beyond words, and he had with him some destitute children; at his feet was kneeling a sister clothed in black, and with a cross on her breast. The saint smiled graciously at them, as he was wont to do in life, and said: "You know me again, then? I am the Father of these beloved Sisters, who will live in my spirit, and according to my rule; and this is the habit I wish them to wear." And then the vision disappeared, leaving them filled with joy and consolation; and the Holy Father approved their rule and their habit, and gave them a form of prayer and blessing for the admission and clothing of the sisters.

The Rule of the Congregation of the Oratory was, as we have seen, approved by Pope Paul V. in 1612, and the *Filippine* adopted it as the guide of their life too. Slowly and gradually, with great precautions and after much deliberation, this rule was modified and adapted to their need, and was then approved by the

Holy See, and printed in 1646, in the pontificate of Innocent X. Houses of *Filippine* were set up in Naples, Palermo, Aquila, Fano, Camerino, Florence, Jesi, and Foligno, and they were numerous in Spain. In our own day, the saintly F. Faber founded in London a house of *Filippine*, under the title of the Oratory of Compassion. In Rome the *Filippine*, like all other religious communities, had from the first their Cardinal Protector. One of these, Cardinal Camillo Cibo, transferred them in the eighteenth century to the populous quarter of the Monti, and established them on the Esquiline, and there are still found a few Sisters of S. Philip, who preserve in all their freshness the spirit and the traditions of the saint. May they, in the mercy of God, and in His good time, renew their strength and bloom forth again, to the consolation of the poor and of all who suffer!

But it is time now to return to our blessed saint, rapt in prayer in his little room at the Vallicella, with the dawn of the eternal day so near.

CHAPTER XIX.

DEATH OF CORDELLA—PHILIP'S LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH —VISIONS AND MIRACLES.

THE last months of Philip's life were beautiful as the close of a serene and cloudless day; but as a pensive sadness sinks down on our hearts, because the splendour of the sunset is leading up the darkness which will take from the face of nature its loveliness, so during these months the increasing infirmities of our saint and the presentiment of his coming death, made those around realize the blank and the gloom that would come on them when he was gone. It is a time of unutterable pathos as well as beauty, and as we retrace it we have need to remember that *the souls of the just are in the hands of God; in the eyes of the unwise they seem to die, but they are in peace.*

Towards the end of February the saint, who seemed to be living detached from the things that are seen, and absorbed in God, gave proof that the warmth and tenderness of his affections were unabated still, and that, as is said in the Bull of his canonization, the light of prophecy rested habitually on him. Gallonio relates the occurrence in these words: "Philip tenderly loved Girolamo Cordella, a physician of eminence, both because of his great piety, and because he had so often attended him with affection and sympathy in illness. Now, while I was with the blessed Father, as was my

wont, on the evening of the 25th February, I was called down to the door to see the handmaiden of Cordella's wife. And behold, while I was going down stairs without knowing for what purpose I was wanted, the blessed Father said with deep emotion: 'O Cordella! O Cordella! He will certainly die; his hour is come.' Those who stood by were amazed at his words, because neither they nor the Father could know what the girl had come to say to me. On reaching the door I found that Cordella had been slightly indisposed in the morning, and had sent to commend himself earnestly to Philip's prayers. I at once gave the message to the holy Father, and he again exclaimed, and with still deeper emotion: 'O poor Cordella! poor Cordella! This time he will die, and that before long.' We then said to him: 'O Father, though we can do nothing for this good man's body, surely we will do what we can to help his soul?' To which he answered with great devotion: 'Ah, yes, yes; this we will gladly do;' and having said these words he betook himself to prayer. A few days passed away, until one morning, when F. Consolini and I went very early to take a light to Philip, he said as soon as he saw us: 'So Cordella died at such an hour, did he not?' And then, becoming aware that we had heard nothing about it, he began to speak of something else. The community then sent a messenger to inquire how Cordella was, and it was found that he was dead, and at the very time the saint had said. We were astounded at this, and still more when we heard that Philip had said to Cardinal Cusano, who was speaking about Cordella: 'God gave me the grace to be present with him at his death, though I was at that moment here in my room.'"

During the month of March Philip's health must have been at least tolerably good, for Gallonio tells us

that it was then that he went to see Pope Clement and cured him of his gout. But on the 30th March began that last illness which brought him at length to the grave. He was on that day seized with a violent fever and cold shivering, which reduced his strength so much that when Cardinal Valerio of Verona came to see him, he could not speak a single word to him. This unusually severe and terrible attack of fever filled the hearts of all around him with fear and consternation; but still, after a few days, the violence of the disease abated. The fever lasted throughout the month of April, and brought the saint so low that every one felt the last dreaded hour of separation was not far off. Still the blessed Father did not lose his courage or his cheerfulness; he prayed unceasingly, bore his sufferings without a murmur, and even welcomed with his wonted sweetness and benignity all his spiritual children who came to see him. On the 7th April, while the fever was still on him, he wrote to Vittorio d'Ancisa in Florence a letter, of which we have already spoken as being the saint's last greeting to his beloved Florence; its concluding words show the spirit in which he was preparing for death: "I entreat you," he says to the holy priest his friend, "to commend me constantly to our Lord God. I feel the greater need of His grace now that my death is drawing on, for I do not know that I have ever done any good."

At the beginning of this illness Philip seemed to wish to say farewell to all he loved on earth, and gathered around him as many of his sons in the congregation as he could. His much-loved Tarugi was in Avignon, amidst the cares and anxieties of his office. It was hard to die without once more embracing him, but he would not have him disturbed. In regard of some

other fathers, who were in Naples or elsewhere, he made the sacrifice of affection to charity. But on the 31st March he summoned from Naples F. Flaminio Ricci, whom he loved with a singular love, and whose return to the Vallicella had been previously decreed. On that day he said to F. Germanico Fedeli: "Write in my name to F. Ricci, and tell him to come at once to Rome, because I wish to embrace him again before I die." F. Flaminio received these touching words, but wrote back that he was detained by some matters of very great importance, and that he wished to delay his return to the month of September; he could not grasp the nearness of Philip's end. When the blessed Father received this reply, he bade F. Germanico write again and urge F. Ricci to come to Rome without delay, as soon as the letter reached him. F. Ricci was preparing to leave for Rome when he was again detained by some personages of high station, among whom was Annibale of Capua, archbishop of Naples. The saint was grieved at these many obstacles, and sent two more letters to hasten the return of F. Flaminio, because he *must* embrace him once more before his death. When the last letter was despatched he was heard to say, as if to himself: "He will not be in time now." And so it came to pass. Philip had not the consolation he longed for, and F. Flaminio was overwhelmed with sorrow and surprise.

The 1st of May was the feast of S. Philip and S. James—Philip's own feast-day—and as the fever lingered on throughout the month of April, he besought the Lord to give him grace and strength to say mass once more on that day. Our Lord granted his prayer. That morning Philip rose from his bed for the first time, said mass, and gave communion to several of his

spiritual children; and he did all this without apparent effort or fatigue, so that it was evident that God had miraculously raised him up once more. He had, indeed, foreseen this recovery; for during his illness, when his state was looked on as past hope, he said to Nero del Nero: "I mean to give you communion on the feast of S. Philip and S. James; for I know they will get me grace to say mass on that day, and I shall say it."

Still the blessed saint submitted to abstain from saying mass for three days, in obedience to his physicians, who urged him to wait until it was certain that health was re-established. He received holy communion every morning, however; he refused to be deprived even for one day of the Blessed Eucharist; and at the end of the prescribed time he said mass again daily up to the 12th May. On the 5th he felt so much stronger that he wrote a letter to his niece, Sister Anna Maria Tregui, the last but one he ever wrote. It is of little importance. The saint informs his niece that he has not been able to obtain some favour her convent had asked, and ends by saying: "If I can be in any other matter of use to your Community, it will give me very great pleasure, for it grieves me greatly that I have failed in obtaining their request."

The 12th May, the Friday before Pentecost, was a day of terror and bitter anguish at the Vallicella. It was in itself, to the whole house and to Philip especially, a bright and joyous day, the feast of the holy martyrs Nereus and Achilleus, protectors of the Congregation. Five years before, Philip had welcomed to the Vallicella with singular gratitude and joy the relics of these martyrs, and now on the day of their feast he was suddenly seized with an effusion of blood from the mouth so abundant that he was left without sensible pulse,

and without hope of recovery; it was something altogether new in his life, he had broken a blood-vessel in his chest. At this appalling sight a cold shudder ran throughout the whole Congregation. Cardinal Frederic Borromeo was with them; he had been appointed archbishop of Milan, but had not yet set out for his diocese. As Philip lay insensible and exhausted, Baronio, who was Superior, despaired of giving him the Viaticum, and therefore administered Extreme Unction. After receiving this sacrament Philip revived a little, so that Cardinal Borromeo thought that he might also receive the Viaticum, and asked to be allowed the consolation of giving it to the saint with his own hand.

The saintly old man was lying on the bed with his eyes closed; he lay motionless and still as one already dead, without pulse, and scarcely breathing. But when Cardinal Borromeo entered the room, bearing with him the most holy Sacrament, he all at once opened his eyes, burst into tears, and cried out with a loud voice and an unwonted fervour of soul: "Behold my Love! Behold my Love! Behold my only Good! Give me my Love quickly, quickly!" Those who were present were so amazed at the sudden change which had come over the saint, and so moved by the fervour of his desire, that they could not refrain from tears. The fathers could not restrain their emotion, and the Cardinal could scarcely command himself to utter the words of the ritual. He drew near to the bed and said the *Domine, non sum dignus* in a subdued voice and with great devotion. At the sound of these words Philip's whole being was roused; his love of God imparted to his exhausted body an incredible and astounding vigour; he repeated *Domine, non sum dignus*, with a voice so loud and yet so devout, that he seemed to be

quite well and strong. And then, as he was about to receive Holy Communion, he burst forth: "O my Lord, of Thee I am not worthy, and I have never been worthy of Thee; I have never done one single good thing;" and while uttering these and other like words, his eyes streamed with tears, and his countenance was as that of an angel. The Cardinal paused a while to let the saint relieve his overburdened heart, and as he drew near to communicate him Philip exclaimed: "Come, come, O my Lord," and then was silent. When he had received Holy Communion he was overheard to say: "Now I have received the true Physician of my soul. He who seeks aught but Christ knows not what he seeks. *Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity.*" And then he gathered himself up, and was lost in God.

During the whole of that day it was beautiful to see the dear old man calm and bright as if he were suffering nothing. In the evening the effusion of blood returned again and again, and was accompanied with sharp pain, a harassing cough, and an oppression of the chest so terrible that it almost stopped his breathing. He gave no sign of alarm or anxiety, but murmured again and again, and always with a bright smile: "I feel I am dying." His thoughts went back to those earlier days in which he had longed to die for Christ in some heathen land, and he was heard to say: "Praised be God, that I can in some way at least give Him back blood for blood." Seeing one of his beloved sons gazing at him as if scared by the mournful sight, he turned to him with a cheerful smile and said: "You are frightened, eh? I have not a bit of fear." On this day, moreover, he began to show that he was enlightened by God in regard of his approaching death. The abbate Marc' Antonio Maffa, who had come to see him, said:

"Padre, have no fear; God will grant you yet a long time to live, for the good of souls, if for nothing else." And Philip answered with his wonted playfulness: "If you will be good enough to get me through this year, I will give you something very handsome."

In this state Philip continued throughout the night, but when the physicians came to see him in the morning he began to jest with them, and said: "Be off with you all; my remedies are a great deal more availing than yours. This morning very early I sent alms to several convents to have masses and prayers said for me, and now you see I have not spit blood since; I am quite free from pain, the oppression on my chest is gone, and I am so much better that I fancy I am quite cured. Look at me; am I not really in perfect health?" The physicians stood astounded at these words; they felt his pulse and examined him, and found that he was really cured, and then declared that his recovery was an unquestionable and most amazing miracle.

From this 13th May to the 26th, the day of his death, are thirteen days of wonder and of mystery. Philip was perfectly well, so well that it was hard to believe he had been so lately at the point of death. He said office every day, and mass; he heard confessions, gave communion, and conversed with his friends as cheerfully as ever he did. They all of them felt sure, the fathers especially, that they were not going to lose him so soon as they feared. His perfect peace and his sunny cheerfulness convinced them that they might hope that God would spare him to them for some years more. But, on the other hand, the utterances of the saint contrasted very strikingly with his evident good health. Philip was wont to say, indeed, that he endured life

but desired death; but he was very rarely known to allude to his own death, probably because he did not like to cast a shade of sorrow on the hearts of his sons. But now he spoke of it often, as of something near at hand, towards which he was going joyously. He saw from the looks of those around him that he made them sad, but he did not on that account change his way of speaking. "My sons," he said repeatedly, "we must die, we have to die." And when some, who were weary of hearing the same words again and again, said to him in reply; "Father, we know of course that we have to die," Philip answered them: "I tell you we have to die, and you do not believe it." Meanwhile the fathers of the congregation and Philip's other disciples listened with great attention to all his words, either to gather some instruction for their guidance in the spiritual life, or it may be from another motive. They all knew that Philip's mind was habitually illuminated with the light of the spirit of prophecy, and they watched his words to confirm their hope of being blessed with his presence among them for years to come. But every word he said pointed more or less clearly to his death as near; and this struck them the more painfully that he had never before, even in his worst illnesses, talked of his dying. The meaning of his words was obscure, indeed, but still too precise and consistent to be merely the expression of a presentiment; when they came to put them all together, they felt that he clearly knew the time and place and circumstances of his death. He would not appear to be prophesying, and therefore he spoke mysteriously and covertly, with the utmost serenity of mind and simplicity of language, and always with the tenderest affection and sympathy. He well knew their sorrowful apprehensions, and, like

our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, *having loved his own, he loved them unto the end.*

He said several times to F. Germanico Fedeli: "What trouble you have taken for me; but it will not last much longer now!" One evening he took his hand, and pressing it affectionately, said to him: "O Germanico, what you will see within the next few days!" He repeated these words so often that F. Germanico became quite alarmed, thinking that some great evil was impending over Christendom; but when he had seen Philip die, he knew the meaning and the affectionate intention of them. On the 18th May the Father Superior sent F. Germanico to Carbognano, a place about a day's journey from Rome, where the Congregation had some property. Before leaving, Germanico came to ask the saint's blessing, and said to him: "Father, I set out very unwillingly unless your Reverence will promise me that I shall find you alive and well on my return." "How long shall you be away?" asked Philip. "I shall be back again in Rome at latest on the eve of *Corpus Domini*," answered Germanico. The saint remained awhile absorbed in thought, and then said: "Go, and come back by the time you say." F. Germanico then started for Carbognano, and was detained there for several days; but the night before the eve of *Corpus Domini* he had a dream of singular vividness: he seemed to be in Rome and in the saint's room, he saw him sitting on his bed, and heard him say: "Now I am going." Thereupon he awoke in great distress, and set out at once for Rome, notwithstanding the pressing entreaties of the people of Carbognano that he would stay with them over the great festival. He reached Rome in the evening, and found Philip in perfect health; but as he kissed his hand the

saint said to him: "You have done quite right in coming back; it would have been a mistake to delay longer." The following night Philip died.

Still clearer were the words he spoke to Nero del Nero on the 14th May, twelve days before his death. On that day he was so unusually well that Nero could not help expressing his great joy, and congratulating him on his perfect recovery; but Philip made answer: "My Nero, I am quite cured, and feel at this moment that nothing ails me; but be sure of this that I have only a few days before I shall die. When I die no one will have a thought of it, and my death will be just between the darkness and the dawn." Another circumstance that filled the hearts of the fathers with consternation was what happened to the young Francesco Zazzara, who was on the point of entering the congregation.[1] This holy youth, seeing that Philip was old and infirm, and that he could not hope to have the blessing of his guidance much longer, had earnestly entreated the saint to tell him before he died what he should do to persevere in the ways of God; and Philip promised him that he would not fail to do so. Zazzara never forgot this promise, and reminded Philip of it from time to time; but three years passed away, and still Philip answered him: "Make your mind quite easy, my son, for I pray for you every day in my mass, and I will not fail to tell you whatsoever the Lord may reveal to me. Do not fancy, then, that I shall die without first disclosing to you all I want of you. You have put your confidence in me, and you may be sure you will not find yourself disappointed." Zazzara there-

[1] Gallonio says that in 1600, when he wrote, Zazzara was in the congregation and already a priest.

upon laid aside his fears, and consoled himself with the certainty that Philip's death was not so near as he thought. The saint was often ill, and in apparent danger of death, but still he never said a single word to Zazzara until the 16th May. Philip seemed to be in perfect health, but he then suddenly called him, and told him everything he had promised to tell him before his death. Francesco received the directions of the saint with gratitude and delight, but burst into tears at thought of his now approaching death, and Philip soothed him with gentle and tender words.

On the 15th May, another mysterious utterance of our saint seemed to confirm the fears of those who were watching him so intently. Gallonio tells us that he seldom or never left the blessed Father's room; but on that day he went away to say mass, leaving in his place Giambattista Guerra, a lay-brother of the congregation. Philip looked at him awhile, and then said: "What day of the month is it, my brother?" He answered: "The fifteenth." "Fifteen," said Philip, as if to himself; "fifteen and ten make twenty-five, and then we shall go away."

While Philip was thus preparing the minds of his beloved sons for his approaching death, he dwelt much on the thought of those who were living far away from Rome, and of those also who were in any way connected with the Oratory. On the 19th May, seeing that notwithstanding his urgent entreaties F. Flaminio Ricci did not arrive from Naples, he dictated and signed with his own hand a letter to the Ladies Spadafuora, who were greatly distressed at the recall of F. Flaminio to Rome, and were probably putting every obstacle in the way of his return. It is a letter worthy of being put on record because it is

the last written word we possess of our saint, and because it shows that his gracious and tender charity remained with him to the last. The ladies to whom it was addressed were three unmarried sisters of noble birth, penitents of F. Flaminio Ricci, and generous supporters of the Oratory in Naples. Philip had heard much of them, and loved them much for the affection and generosity they showed to his Oratory. Their only brother, moreover, had given himself to the service of God, and entered the Naples Congregation in 1587, in the flower of his youth. His life was short, but singularly pious and edifying; he died a few months before our saint, leaving his great property to the Oratory after the death of his sisters. And thus we see why Philip, only seven days before his death, sent them these words of consolation:

"My most illustrious ladies, and most highly honoured in the Lord.

"The recall of F. Flaminio to Rome has not been decided hastily, nor without much consideration. It is a step which, on many accounts and for many grave needs, ought to have been taken long ago; but our care and affection for our house in Naples, and for all those who love it, have induced us to delay his recall to the present moment. . . . I sympathize very deeply with your sorrow and regret; but I hope that God will make you full amends, inwardly by His presence and grace, and outwardly by means of the other fathers of the congregation. Knowing how greatly we are bound to you, they will not fail to put some other in the place of F. Flaminio. And I pledge myself to have constant memory of you, commending you to our Lord, and beseeching Him to comfort you, and to increase to you day by day His

light and His love. And, in conclusion, I commend myself earnestly to your prayers."

From this time to the eve of Corpus Christi, the 24th May, there was little in the life of our saint that calls for special remark. One thing, however, struck the hearts of the fathers with apprehension and gloom: Philip got together all his letters, papers, records, and writings of every kind, and then had them burned; he would leave nothing behind him. The reverence with which the fathers regarded his wishes restrained them, doubtless, from trying to save at least some of these precious writings; and it is quite possible that the saint destroyed them without the knowledge of Baronio and the older fathers.

Many things occurred on the 24th May to dim at least, if not to destroy, the hopes of the sons of our saint. On that day a woman named Bernardina, who was about eighty years of age, was lying at the point of death, without the faintest hope of her recovery. Thereupon F. Carli, one of the fathers who had charge of the parish, told her that he would go and recommend her to the prayers of Philip, which he accordingly did. The saint began at once to pray for her with his wonted charity and fervour, and when he had finished his prayer he said with marked decision: "Go, Bernardina will recover, and I shall die." It was noted that at the moment Philip began to pray for her the dying woman began to revive, and was soon restored to health. That same day the saint called F. Consolini to him as if he wished to take leave of him, and after some conversation he bade him lay his hand on his chest, on the very place where his heart was beating so impetuously beneath the broken and protruding ribs. And while Consolini was overcome with emotion Philip said to

him: "Mind you say mass for me." Consolini replied that he had already done so, and that he always said mass for him when he had no other obligation; and then he added: "But I see no especial reason why I should say mass for you now, dear Father, for you are quite recovered." Then the saint fixed on him a look of unutterable affection and said: "The mass I ask of you is not one of those you mean, but the mass of the dead." These words pierced the heart of Consolini with anguish, and over all the fathers there came a sad and painful foreboding; and yet they clung to hope; they could not believe that he whom they saw so unusually well and even vigorous could be so near death.

And, indeed, it could not fail to be noticed that in all this interval Philip was more lively and cheerful than usual, and his face seemed to beam and sparkle with joy, especially while he was saying mass. The 25th May was the Feast of the Most Holy Sacrament. Philip rose very early, and gave orders to let in all who had come to confession, and he heard them all just as if he were in robust health. Still, the thought of death was present to him and flooded his soul with gladness. He asked some of his penitents to say a rosary for him after his death, and on others he imposed it as their penance; and to each he gave some spiritual counsel, more than was his wont. He besought them to frequent the holy sacraments, to hear the sermons at the Oratory whenever they could, and to read the Lives of the saints. To some he gave more pertinent and personal counsel according to their need; and he asked Francesco della Molara what his income was, and how his affairs stood, and gave him advice on the management of his property—a thing he had never done before. He also embraced all who came to him

that morning with great tenderness, and pressed them to his heart, and caressed them more than was his usual way. When the confessions were over, he recited his office with extraordinary devotion, and then said mass in his little chapel two hours earlier than his usual time.

This mass, Philip's last mass, is something altogether apart and unapproachable in its mystic, soothing beauty, and it was to the saint at once a presage and a foretaste of the glory that awaited him. We remember his first mass; then his emotion was impetuous and almost turbulent; the immensity of his love made his heart bound and leap within him, and took him out of and above himself. Now, there is the unbroken peace and the harmony of Paradise. As he began his mass he looked fixedly at the hill of S. Onofrio, which was visible from his chapel, and to which he had so often gone with rejoicing troops of the young he loved so well. He gazed long on the well-known hill, from which he would never again see Rome spread out in its majesty at his feet. As Jesus, when coming for the last time down the slope of the Mount of Olives, beheld Jerusalem as it lay before Him in careless unforeboding loveliness, and wept as He pronounced its doom, so perhaps in spirit Philip looked out once more over the city so dear to his heart, and took farewell of each familiar spot. But Philip's look was not one of sorrow; all could see that there was before him as he gazed some bright, joyous, and enrapturing vision. He then went on with his mass, and when he came to the *Gloria in excelsis,* his heart overflowed with such unwonted gladness that he began to sing, and his singing was festive and exultant, as of one whose feet were already on the threshold of the joy of his Lord. Throughout

the rest of the mass the jubilation of his soul modulated his voice at times to a chant, so that this last mass stands alone and without parallel in his life, and impressed all who were present with amazement and a mysterious delight.

He then gave communion to many of his devoted friends, who were now seldom away from his presence. After mass the fathers brought him a little soup to revive his strength, and as he took it he turned to the others who were standing by and said: "These men fancy I am quite cured; but they are mistaken." He then set himself again to hear confessions, and it was noticed by all that his words were more gentle, and his manner more caressing and affectionate than usual. After this, Cardinals Cusano and Borromeo came in as they were returning from the procession of the Blessed Sacrament; and they remained with him, talking of God and of divine things, till dinner-time. He then took his usual scanty collation, and rested a short time; after which he said Vespers and Compline with more than ordinary devotion; the rest of the day he spent partly in receiving those who came to see him, and partly in listening to the Lives of the Saints. His manner towards all who came was singularly affectionate, and when they went away he bade them farewell as if for the last time. Francesco Zazzara then read to him from the Life of S. Bernardine of Siena, and when he came to his death he had it read over to him a second time. About five o'clock Cardinal Cusano came again, and with him Girolamo Pamfili, auditor of the Rota, and Spinello Benci, bishop of Montepulciano; with them Philip said Matins of the following day—the rest of that day's office, says Bacci, he was to finish with the angels in Paradise. After Matins they went

back to Philip's room; and it was noticed that when Cardinal Cusano offered to assist Philip in going up the stairs which led from the loggia to his room, the saint would not let him, and said: "Do you think that I am not hale and strong?" When they had entered his room, Angelo da Bagnorea, the physician, came in, saying he had only dropped in as a friend, and not as a physician. He, however, felt his pulse and added: "Why, father, you are better at this moment than you have ever been; for the last ten years I have not seen you in such robust health;" and he said the same thing to F. Gallonio and other fathers as he was going away. These words somewhat cheered the fathers; but still a dim mysterious awe rested on them; the contrast between his apparent health and vigour and his hints of approaching death was so striking. That evening, too, they remarked that when Cardinal Cusano had made his confession and was taking his leave, Philip, contrary to his usual custom, went with him as far as the stairs, and then pressed his hands warmly, and looked in his face tenderly and long, as if he would say: "We shall not see each other again." Then he went back to his room, shook off his emotion, and quietly heard confessions again till supper-time.

Philip supped alone, as was his wont, and after supper he heard the confessions of the fathers who had to say the early masses. Many of those living in the house then came for his blessing, as was their custom, and in giving it them he addressed to each some few words of extraordinary sweetness. At the third hour after nightfall, about ten o'clock, he prayed awhile with great recollectedness and fervour, and then got into bed in perfect health, without the slightest indication of infirmity. As he composed himself in bed, those who were

waiting on him heard him repeat to himself with earnest feeling the words he had so often said of late: "Well, last of all, one has to die," and their hearts were pierced with sorrow. Shortly after this he asked what time it was; and when he was told that the third hour of the night had just struck, he said, as if talking only to himself: "Three and two are five, three and three are six, and then we shall go." The fathers did not understand the sense of these words then, because the saint's unusual vigour and the words of the physician had lulled their apprehensions for the time. He then turned to Gallonio and the other fathers who were in the room, and said: "Now then, go and take your rest." "He then held his peace," says Gallonio, "and would not disclose to us the secret of his approaching death, lest, as I think, our hearts should be crushed with over-much sorrow. And so we left him in his gladness, with a foretaste of that ineffable sweetness he could not enjoy to the full while living in the body, but which was so soon to break upon his soul as a torrent."

And now that we draw near to the moment of Philip's departure from this earthly life, I will use the words of Gallonio, who relates with simple pathos what he saw and felt. "When we took leave of Philip," he says, "we went to rest that night without a thought of danger, least of all, of approaching death. At the sixth hour of the night, however, he began to walk about his room, whereon I, whose room was under his, awoke and ran quickly to see what was the matter, for I feared he might have another attack like the others some days before, and which had given us so great alarm. I found him sitting on his bed, his throat so full of phlegm or blood that I feared he would choke

I asked him how he felt, and he told me simply that he was dying. I was all alone with him, and so could do nothing to relieve him; wherefore I ran at once to call Alessandro Alluminati, of the congregation, and others, and to bid them fetch the doctors. Before they came we stood there in great fear, and as the suffering increased we began to torment him with cupping-glasses and bandages, and we rubbed his throat much, while he in his humility and obedience endured with patience all we proposed to do. In something less than a quarter of an hour the phlegm or blood which had gathered in his throat was cleared away altogether, and he seemed to be as he was before, and spoke distinctly and with ease. But our joy was soon turned into mourning, for while we were thinking what would relieve him he said to us: 'If you have no other remedies, do not trouble yourselves any more, for I am dying.' After these words, seeing that his hour was come, the hour so greatly longed for, when he was to leave the world and be wholly one with God, he held his peace and turned all the affections of his heart towards God, who was calling him to receive his reward; and then, as though he would prepare for the combat with death, he sat down resolutely on the bed, and never moved again until he died. Meanwhile all the fathers were summoned to his bed of death, and it seemed as if he only waited till all had come to give up his soul to God. They knelt all round the bed, all about the room, bewailing the loss of a Father so holy with bitter tears and sobs. And who is there of heart so hard that, seeing Philip die, he could refrain from tears? Meanwhile Baronio made the commendation of his soul in the usual form, and then the physicians came, and after feeling his pulse, said that he was dying.

This was a fresh sorrow to our hearts, for we could not think his end so near, sitting as he was on his bed like one asleep, with a little difficulty of breathing, and nothing else. When Baronio heard the words of the physicians he turned at once from them to Philip, and with a loud appealing voice said: Father, Father, are you then leaving us thus without a word? We entreat you, give us at least your blessing! Philip had closed his weary eyes to the world, but at the appeal of Baronio he opened them once more, raised them towards heaven and kept them there fixed awhile, and then with a loving smile, as if his prayer was heard, he looked around upon us all, and slightly moved his hand as if in blessing. And then, without other sign of effort or pain, he heaved one long sigh, and gently fell asleep in the Lord."

Such was the blessed death of S. Philip Neri. Gallonio adds: "Who can ever tell with what tears that death was bewailed! His spiritual sons lamented him sore, and all his friends mourned for him, grieving most of all that they should never hear his gentle voice again. He died in the night of the solemnity of the most Holy Sacrament, shortly after the sixth hour, as he had himself foretold."

Who can speak worthily of the splendour of that chosen soul as it passed away from earth in the beauty of its holiness, washed in the Precious Blood of Jesus, and bright with the reflexion of His glory? At the moment of his departure, his perfected and burning charity yearned to shed itself abroad in blessings and consolations to the souls he was leaving amidst the perils and the sorrows of the world; and to this end Almighty God permitted him to appear to some pious persons, simple souls and by man almost unknown,

and so perhaps more worthy in the eyes of God of so great a grace. As in the natural order He bestows on some souls high endowments of intellect or imagination, so there are souls on whom He bestows rare and distinguishing gifts in the supernatural order. Bacci, who takes these facts from the processes of the saint's canonization, tells us that he thus appeared to Teo Guerra of Siena, and said to him: "Peace be with thee, my brother; behold, I am going to a better place." Ortensia Anelli, a nun of S. Cecilia's in the Trastevere, saw him all clothed in white, and with an angel on either hand; and she heard him say: "I am going to my rest; do thou persevere in the labours of the religious life, for where I am going thither thou shalt also come; and doubt not that I shall pray more for thee to God now than heretofore." Sister Vittoria dei Massimi had been a penitent of his, and to her he said: "I have come to see thee before I go, that thou mayest not lament for me." "Ah, father," replied the sister, "you mean, then, to go to Paradise?" and then Philip showed her a wild heath all covered with thorns, and said: "If thou wouldst come where I am going, thou must pass through these." And with that she awoke in tears, with these words on her lips: "Ah, my father, I shall never see you more!" and at that moment the sixth hour of the night struck. He showed himself also to another nun, who was mistress of novices in the convent of S. Maria Maddalena on Monte Cavallo; and when, as she was wont to do, she began to speak to him of her scruples, he said: "Let me go, for I can tarry now no longer." None of these had any knowledge or presentiment of Philip's death, and on all, this gracious vision left a sense of ineffable sweetness and consolation.

There lived at Morlupo, about sixteen miles from Rome, a virgin of the third order of S. Dominic, whose name was Sister Caterina Polizzi, a person of great perfection of life. She had never seen Philip, though she had eagerly longed to do so, and had not heard of his death. On the morning of the 26th May, after she had received Holy Communion, she saw before her a venerable old man, seated in glory, and clothed in white vestments as a priest. Around his throne was an ample space, whereon she saw written in letters of gold the principal virtues of the saint, and there were also very many souls of every rank and condition. She felt a great desire to know who those souls were, whose eyes were so fixed upon that venerable man; and she seemed to hear a voice saying they were the souls which had been saved by his means. When she told this vision to her director, F. David Negri, a Dominican, he asked her whether she could describe the features and look of the old man she had seen; and then he showed her a portrait of Philip, on seeing which she exclaimed: "That is the very old man I saw!" At this time the death of the saint could not be known in Morlupo. Bacci also relates a remarkable vision vouchsafed a few days later to Artemisia Cheli, who afterwards became a nun.

The next morning F. Pompeo Pateri, secretary of the congregation, communicated the sorrowful tidings to the fathers of Naples in the following simple letter, which was sent by a special messenger: "This night, soon after the sixth hour, our dearest Father Philip took his flight to heaven, without fever, or illness of any kind; but yesterday he said mass and talked a long time as usual, and went to bed at the third hour. Then, just before the sixth hour, came an accumulation

of phlegm in his throat, and without a word he entered into his rest as if he were going to sleep. I need not say what we are bound to do for that blessed soul, for all will make due return for the love which the Father showed us all while he lived." These unexpected tidings filled the hearts of the Naples Congregation with consternation and mourning, and all longed for fuller details. On the 27th Baronio wrote as follows: "I sent you tidings by an express of the happy transit from this world of our blessed Father, who now lives in heaven to pray for us. I can now do no more than confirm these tidings, and tell you for your consolation that we are all, by the grace of God, closely united, steadfast, and confirmed in peace. We are all resolutely minded to persevere in the same spirit of peace and holy oneness of charity in which we were begotten and nurtured by the blessed Father. This is the counsel given us by all who wish us well, that we should walk heedfully in the very print of the steps left by our beloved Father. We feel sure that this same spirit, flowing from the same source of charity, will run on as peacefully and as clear amongst you. I send you the *Capitolo*, that is to say, the decree never to change the congregation into a religious order with vows. The said *Capitolo* our Father left us in these his last days of convalescence as his final testament, and the foundation stone of the congregation. It was deeply pondered by us all, and by all solemnly ratified and accepted; nor do I doubt that you, as his sons and heirs, will accept this last codicil of the holy and blessed testator. I have not now time to write at length, being continually called to receive those who come to condole with us on our loss. In a word, all of us here say to you all: *Now we live, if ye stand fast in*

the Lord. . . . Peace be with you!" On that same day F. Pozzo wrote a long letter full of details, which is now preserved in the archives of the Naples Oratory, and in which are these words: "We are full of hope that our dearest Father Philip will for the future help us even more effectually by his prayers in heaven than he did while on earth. Your Reverences need not be told what is our desolation, and that of all who knew him. The Pope's love and devotion towards F. Philip were so great that when he received the tidings he was overcome with grief, and sent to us Signor Silvio, his Maestro di Camera, to condole with us on his behalf, and to assure us that he will always have the greatest care of the Congregation, and of each one of its members. He exhorts us to keep ourselves united in charity, and says that he will continue to us all the same love and confidence he felt towards our blessed Father, and that he hopes much from our prayers in all his labours and perplexities. He begs us also to give the same counsel and assurances on his behalf to your Reverences in Naples."

All these letters are worthy of attention, not only as expressions of the grief of the sons of a father so beloved, but for the air of peace, and charity, and union they breathe. This had been the aim of Philip's life, and his efforts were not in vain. When his will was read, it was a fresh manifestation of the spirit he wished to infuse into the Congregation. He had made it in 1581; he says that he appoints his singularly beloved congregation of the Oratory heir of all he possessed, saving that he condoned all that was owing to him by the community of S. Girolamo, and left three small bequests to fathers Gallonio, Germanico Fedeli, and Alessandro Alluminati, of the

congregation. It contained, moreover, some brief counsels. He remembered how he had begun his life of perfection, and insists on the beauty of holy poverty. He exhorts them to trust in God, especially in regard of the debt still remaining unpaid on the house; he urges them to keep themselves detached from all love of money, and to love holy poverty as the surest means of acquiring humility, the spirit of prayer, charity towards others, confidence in God, and all other virtues; and he concludes by bidding them love the rules he had laid down for them, and love one another with an especial love.

As they stood weeping and disconsolate around the body of their father, it was noted that there breathed from it an indescribable air of sanctity. He lay like one peacefully sleeping, and his features, all composed and serene, seemed to shine and sparkle; all spoke of peace and consolation around that bed of death. The fathers immediately proceeded to clothe the holy body in the priestly vestments, and then bore it down into the church, the whole community following it with lighted torches. At dawn the church was opened, and the mournful tidings went out over all Rome, and everywhere produced in persons of every condition an exceeding sorrow and desolation of soul. Erelong the church was crowded with those who came to look for the last time on the features so familiar and so dear. Many had faith that Philip's gift of miracles was not withdrawn by death, and that his power would be greater far than ever, now that he was so near the source of all grace. Flowers were cast in profusion over his face and over all that blessed body, and then eagerly seized by those who felt that the mere touch of Philip would impart to them a healing virtue. And

soon it was seen that they were the children of those we read of in the Acts of the holy Apostles: *they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that when Peter came, his shadow at the least might overshadow any of them, and they might be delivered from their infirmities.*

Those who stood by Philip's bier during those two days felt for the first time how universal his apostolate had been, and how abundant its harvest. Wave after wave of people flowed into the church, all bent on venerating him whom all acclaimed as a saint. Nor were they only the poor who thus expressed their gratitude and devotion. In that eager crowd were Religious of all orders, men of science and letters, noblemen, cardinals, bishops, and prelates without number; if we single out for mention Cardinals Borromeo, Cusano, Paleotto, and Paravicino, it is only because their sorrow and their emotion were most marked and profound. Cardinals Borromeo and Cusano were seen humbly kissing Philip's feet, and weeping bitterly as they did so. Even the duchess of Sessa wife of the ambassador of Spain, came to venerate the remains of the most persevering advocate of the cause of Henry IV. It was striking, too, to see that these crowds did not come only to take a last look as of a dear friend, and say a prayer for his soul; they cast themselves on the ground before Philip, and commended themselves to his prayers. They kissed his hands and his feet, they touched him with their rosaries, sure that virtue would come forth from him; the more daring took some scrap of his vestments, a hair, anything they might treasure up as a relic. Those who could not press closely up to his body kissed the bier on which it lay; ladies put their rings on Philip's fingers for a

moment, hoping thus for some blessing of God. These things may be lightly deemed mere fond exaggerations of piety; but true piety is love, and all real love, be it human or divine, is outside of conventional rules, and to those who do not love, its expressions appear excessive and even meaningless.

All declared that Philip was a great saint, and that they had lost a friend; some spoke of one virtue of his, and others of another; one related some miracle he had wrought, and another some great benefit he had conferred; many repeated words they had heard him say, and many told with gratitude how many years they had been under his direction; and then they spoke of the congregation he had founded, and of the good he had done to the whole Church of God; and they joined with one accord in recalling his gentleness and tenderness and charity and patience towards all who had to do with him. His sons alone were silent then; their hearts were too full for words. While Rome was thus tacitly recognizing him as its Father and apostle, and prelates and priests were saying mass for him, they laid him in the common grave of the congregation simply and without display. Not a word was said in his praise either then or afterwards; there was nothing to call attention to the greatness of the man or the perfection of his sanctity, nothing but the love and the tears of his children. Everything was ordered so as to be the severest expression of his own modesty and humility. In Naples, however, the fathers could not restrain the more ardent and demonstrative character of the faithful; on the 29th May the church of the Girolamini was all hung with black, and a solemn mass of requiem sung with the greatest piety and devotion. Father Pozzo says of it in a letter: "On Monday morning we

sang the Office of the Dead in our church. Then F. Talpa sang the mass, and to my great consolation I was Deacon; never have I discharged that office with greater joy and delight. F. Ottavio was Subdeacon; the music was magnificent, and sung without the organ. It was a pathetic and a moving sight. His most illustrious lordship the Nuncio was there, and the bishop of Castellamare, the vicar of Naples, and an infinite number of prelates, lords, and gentlemen. The three prelates said low masses for F. Philip. In the High Mass F. Tommaso Galletti, who had come from Avignon a few days before, delivered a funeral oration in Latin; it was certainly short, but so touching and devout that no one could listen to it without tears." Baronio then wrote to ask for a copy of the sermon, and when he had read it he wrote to F. Talpa: "We are all very much delighted with F. Tommaso's Oration, and we have put it aside to print it at the end of the Father's Life; and I thank him for it on behalf of all the congregation."

But while the modesty of the fathers of Rome, and their great reverence for the humility of Philip, had forbidden them to pronounce his eulogy at the Vallicella, there were others who were under no such restraint, and who spoke his praises from the pulpit. On the very day of Philip's burial, F. Girolamo Beger, preacher general of the Dominicans, was preaching at the Minerva. The memory of Philip was in every heart, and, therefore, F. Girolamo's sermon was on our blessed Founder, and he said so much in his praise that he seemed to be pronouncing the panegyric of a saint. He said, amongst other things, that there was no need to pray for him as for other dead, since he was most certainly living in the glory of Paradise; the masses of Requiem said for

Philip might be, indeed, helpful to other souls in Purgatory, but not assuredly to his; he had now no need of the prayers of those who were still wayfarers on earth, but was rather praying effectually for them. Many were so carried away by their loving veneration that they wished the Pope to canonize him at once, without any form of process. Of all those around him none knew the sanctity of Philip so intimately and fully as Baronio; yet he followed the use of the Church with a touching simplicity, prayed for him publicly as for any one else who had died in the faith, and offered for his soul the solemn mass of Requiem. But when, in the stillness of his own room, he asked himself whether he could say the *De Profundis* for Philip as for others, he could not make up his mind. On the one hand, his yearning love for the saint prompted him to pray for him unceasingly, since, apart from the judgment of the Church, we can have no certainty that any soul, however holy it may appear to us, is already in the glory of God; and on the other, his heart would not tolerate the thought that Philip could be, even for one brief moment, detained in Purgatory. He therefore laid the matter before God, and earnestly implored Him to manifest His will in this perplexity; and, opening his Breviary, his eye fell on the words: *turn again, look down from heaven, and see, and visit this vineyard: and perfect the same which thy right hand hath planted.* These words dispelled Baronio's doubt; he applied them lovingly to Philip, and used them thenceforward to invoke his presence and aid in all matters of the congregation, and he gave them to the Fathers as their form of prayer to the saint.

After the holy body had remained two whole days exposed to public veneration in the church, the fathers

bore it in procession to the grave, on the evening of the 27th May. On the evening before it had been opened, as was then customary, by Angelo da Bagnorea, Giuseppe Zerta, and Marc' Antonio Belli, in presence of fathers Germanico Fedeli, Alessandro Alluminati, Giovanni Battista Guerra, Giulio Savera, Francesco Zazzara, and a few others. During this operation it was remarked that there was not the slightest smell as of a dead body, but rather a fragrant and reviving odour; and also that the saint veiled himself with his own hand from the eyes of those around, as Gallonio attests that he did while his body was being washed and prepared for burial. "Behold," exclaimed Angelo da Bagnorea, "what angelic purity! Even in his death he gives us a lesson of modesty and reserve!" When they had opened the body, all present saw that two of the ribs immediately over his heart were broken, and curved outwardly into an arch as large as the fist, so that it looked like a tumour on the chest. They recorded many other observations also; his heart was unusually large, and the great artery which leads from it was twice the ordinary size; but all was sound and free from every vestige of disease; whence they concluded that the ardour of his love of God must have been without parallel vehement, and continuous.

Many expressed the desire to have a portrait of the saint, for none of those made during his life were thought to be like him. One of his penitents, a painter named Vecchiotti, when obliged to undertake a voyage to Greece, had implored Philip to let him take his likeness for his own consolation during his absence. Philip consented, and, during a storm at sea, Vecchiotti ascribed his preservation to this portrait. It was subsequently

given to the fathers of the Oratory by Paolo Frigeri, and is now in the saint's room at the Vallicella. But the fathers had either overlooked the existence of this portrait, or did not think it a good likeness; and they, therefore, had a cast of his face taken, from which many very exact models were made in wax.

On the evening of the 27th then, the fathers, most of whom had lived with Philip the greater part of their lives, gathered around him in sadness of heart, to look for the last time on his face, and then they placed his body in a common coffin, and laid it simply in the common burying-place of the congregation under the choir, without any kind of distinction whatever. But it was the will of God to make the sepulchre of His saint glorious. Cardinal Frederic Borromeo remonstrated with the fathers on this excess of humility, and, in concert with Cardinal dei Medici, had the body removed and placed in a sepulchre apart. This was done on the third day after his death. The body of the blessed Father was first laid in a coffin of walnut-wood, bearing engraved on a plate of brass the words, *P. Filippo Neri*, and was then placed in a little chapel above the first arch of the nave of the church on the epistle side, and above the coffin was built a sloping wall. And then the fathers remembered that, just before his death, Philip had said to brother Gian-Battista Guerra: "Yes, you will put me with the other fathers under the high altar, but you will not leave me there." And they remembered, too, that a few days before he died, he had said to F. Bozio: "I mean to come and take up my abode near you; I have quite made up my mind to do so." This little chapel was, in fact, immediately adjoining F. Bozio's room.

When the holy body was taken from the sepulchre it was noticed that there was not the slightest odour of death or decay; all his limbs, and especially his hands, were as flexible as though he were alive; his face retained its beauty, and it wore an expression of nobleness and grandeur, as of one whose soul is at peace, and who sleeps.

The *præcordia* of the saint, and all that had been removed from his body, remained in the common burying-place, in an earthen dish without any covering; but eight months later, on the 26th January 1596, Cardinal Cusano felt so great a desire to have some relic of Philip, that he had them disinterred. They were found to be quite fresh and white, without the least sign of decay, or any offensive odour, just as when they were buried.

Nor did God leave the lifeless body of His saint inglorious and unhonoured; and the glory of the body of a saint lies in this, that it continues to be in His hands the instrument of His mercy and pity towards men. It is, indeed, subject to corruption by reason of original sin; but through the infinite merits of Jesus Christ, and by the virtue of the heavenly food of the Holy Eucharist, it acquires, besides that power whereby it shall rise in glory at the last day, a certain ineffable potency and energy which disposes it to be an apt instrument in the hands of the Lord.

Philip had thought little of his body during his life, and had treated it harshly and with contempt, to bend it beneath the law of the spirit; and now, before it becomes what S. Paul calls a spiritual body, in heaven, it pleases God to give it some prelude and hint of the glory to be hereafter revealed. So we may say of

Philip, in the words of Holy Scripture: *the bones that have been humbled shall rejoice; they spring up and bud out of their place, and all his bones say, Lord, who is like unto Thee?* Bacci records eight of the miracles which were granted during the two days in which the body of the saint remained exposed in the church, and each of these is attested in the processes by many witnesses. Three members of the family of de Magistris were healed by the touch of Philip's hand; Agostino, a boy of eleven, who had suffered all through his life from an incurable scrofulous disease in the throat; a daughter still younger, who was suffering from the same disease; and their father, who was threatened with total blindness. Angelo Contino, who was lying ill of an acute fever, and given over by the doctors, was healed by the touch of some of the flowers which had been strewn upon the saint's body; and the same flowers and leaves cured Epifania Colicchia of her asthma and of an inveterate ulcer, and removed from the wrist of Artemisia Cheli a large swelling or knot, which she had gently rubbed with them. A girl named Maria, of the noble family of the Giustiniani, was healed by the touch of Philip's hair; and a boy, about two years old, the son of Dorotea Brumani, whose legs were so weak and deformed that he could not walk, was instantly and perfectly cured by the contact of his legs with the holy body.

These and other wonders were wrought before the body of Philip was hidden away in the gloom of the grave. But when no human eye saw it more, it was not therefore forgotten. Those who had loved Philip in life loved to visit him in his sepulchre; many prayed to him for help in spiritual and in temporal need; many opened their hearts to him as though

his loving eye were still fixed on them. Seldom could one enter the church of the Vallicella without finding some devout souls kneeling beneath the chapel which enclosed the sacred body, and in the act of prayer.

CHAPTER XX.

AFTER S. PHILIP'S DEATH.

The life of the pagan and the unbeliever fades away for the most part from our minds at their death, and the memory of them is as a sound dying away in the distance. They may leave behind them writings or other records of their passage through the world, but they themselves pass away, and we look for them in vain. Some of their admirers think that the whole man disappeared as the body crumbled into dust; and others, who cannot grasp the idea of a pure and unbodied spirit, beyond the reach of the senses, necessarily cease to hold communion with them. Death is to them the end of all.

But those whose minds are illumined by faith live in closest communion with souls departed from this world; they are gone from us, but they are living still, and their life is a continuation, under other relations, of the life they lived here on earth. We do not see them, nor even it may be the place of their rest, nor the broken relics of their bodies; still we live with them in mind, in heart, and in imagination. The saints of God are living and loving, and therefore our hearts go forth towards them. They are ever present to our memory; we converse with them as when they were here with us, we open our hearts to them as to tender and most mighty friends; for though they do not now hear with

the ears of the body, they are always near to God, and God is always near to us. And so we trustfully tell them our thoughts, our desires, and our needs; and they mysteriously respond to our loving trust, and obtain for us by their prayers, patience and perseverance and light.

The saint of God lives with us, and we live with him, in another manner still. We know that miracles enter into the plan and appointment of God in the mystery of our redemption; and the saints continue to be, after their death as during their life, instruments in His hand for the unfolding of this mystery. And thus we ask them in faith to be the instruments of the power of God in our regard. We may not at times be heard, for God alone is judge of the timeliness and expediency of miracles; but still we pray and hope for supernatural aid from these friends of God who look down on us with love from their abode of rest.

And, moreover, the saints alone leave behind them on earth a true, and real, and abiding succession. Others may, if gifted with genius and learning, leave a school of disciples; but only the saints can perpetuate a spiritual offspring in whom we trace the living and speaking image of their thoughts and affections and works. The sons of S. Benedict, for example, or S. Dominic, or S. Philip, if they are living in the spirit of their vocation, represent to us S. Benedict, S. Dominic, and S. Philip, much more fully and clearly than Platonists represent Plato, or than the lovers of Dante image forth the great Florentine poet. These latter may hand on from generation to generation the ideas of the philosopher, or the poet's literary form; the spiritual sons of the saints alone perpetuate through all time

the thoughts, the affections, the strivings, the whole life, of those whose name they bear.

When the body of S. Philip was laid beneath the high altar of the Vallicella on the evening of the 27th May 1595, he was not only living all glorious in the sight of the Lord, but his life and action here on earth were not at an end; that burial was but the dawn of a new day of veneration, and trust, and love, and wondrous interventions in return. And on these I would pause yet a moment and bless God, before I leave our dear saint, even as at the end of his journey the traveller looks back with pensive regret on the companions and the scenery of the way.

When all was over, and life had fallen back into its ordinary course at the Vallicella, the sons of S. Philip began to live over the past again. They recalled words of his and acts, which they had well-nigh forgotten; they talked of him amongst themselves, and with all who had known him. One remembered some work of miraculous power, and others recalled some act of tender charity; the old spoke of what they had seen in the long past, some still remembered Philip as he was while living with the Caccias, and his wonderful penance in the Catacombs; and thus little by little the web of his beautiful life was woven. The facts and events which had succeeded one another at intervals had left on the minds of all a conviction of Philip's sanctity; but now that they were put together and viewed as parts of a whole, they gave his life a unity and a harmony which increased its significance and beauty.

Thus the fame of Philip's holiness grew and spread with extraordinary and amazing rapidity. The little streams had run together and become a mighty river

moving majestically on in its ample bed. The cardinals and prelates who had known him celebrated his heroic virtues. Cardinal Paleotto's eulogy was passed from one to another and eagerly read; and the testimony of all these great princes of the Church is summed up in the words which Cardinal Borromeo wrote to Gallonio: "You know how much I have revered this saint; you know my love for him. Since his death this has grown instead of lessening; and were it of any use, I would shed my blood to honour his memory."

Such was the state of feeling in regard of our blessed Father when the abbate Maffa and F. Gallonio formed the design of gathering into one the scattered threads of his life for their own consolation, and for the edification of the faithful. Gallonio had lived on terms of most affectionate intimacy with his dear Father Philip, and he began to note down all that he himself remembered, and all he could gather from others, from the fathers of the Congregation, and the many friends of the saint. For five years this was his one thought and work; all his conversation tended to elicit some act or some word of Philip's from every one who came near him. Before two months were over the abbate Maffa had urged Pope Clement to allow a process to be formed in regard of the actions, virtues, and miracles of Philip, and the Pope gladly consented, saying: "Most assuredly we hold him for a saint." He then gave orders to Ludovico Torres, then archbishop of Monreale, and afterwards Cardinal, and to the bishop of Cassano, to begin the process. The charge of examining the witnesses and receiving their depositions was committed to Giacomo Buzio, canon of S. John Lateran, and notary of Girolamo Cardinal Rusticucci, the Pope's vicar. Thus then, this first process in order to the

canonization of our saint was begun on the 2nd August 1595, less than two months after his death.

The holy priest Maffa soon had proof of Philip's loving gratitude. On the 4th August, two days after the beginning of the process, he was suddenly seized with a malignant fever, together with a lethargy. No remedy took effect, and his life began to be despaired of. While in this state he fell into a placid sleep, during which he had a vision, which he himself relates as follows: "I saw in my vision that the house in which I lived was in flames, and that while it was burning some persons outside were trying to throw down its walls. On this two robust young men in perfect health rushed towards the door to escape the peril, but just as they reached it the wall fell on them and killed them both. At this sight my heart was filled with terror, when to my great joy I saw the blessed Father Philip, and heard him indignantly rebuke those who were pulling down the wall, and say: 'Save me the abbate! save me the abbate!' At these words it seemed to me as if all danger passed instantly away. I awoke, and the next day I was perfectly well." In memory of this signal favour, Maffa with his own hand hung on the tomb of the saint a votive tablet, on which was engraved an account of his cure; and he also lighted a lamp before it. This was the first visible sign of devotion to S. Philip, and the fathers shrank from it in their humility, and regarded it as something forbidden by the decrees of Urban V. They therefore removed both the tablet and the lamp; but Maffa, whose devotion to Philip was unbounded, complained to the Pope, and obtained his permission to replace both. This fact is very significant. The decrees of Urban forbid all public *cultus* to

the servants of God who have not been canonized; Clement had often expressed his displeasure at the many violations of them, and in 1602 enforced them anew. He must have felt, then, that Philip's universally recognized sanctity exempted him from the general law.

Among the noble ladies of Rome who were penitents of our saint, none exceeded Giulia Orsini, Marchesa di Rangona, in devotion to his memory. She was, says Gallonio, another S. Paula; she prayed much at Philip's tomb, and said that while praying there she not only felt the greatest interior consolation, but was sensible of an exquisite fragrance, as of roses and lilies. Many ladies followed her example in this holy pilgrimage to the tomb of the saint; and Costanza del Drago gave a silver lamp of great value to be hung before it, and also a crucifix of elaborate and costly workmanship.

Nor were other indications of love and veneration wanting. Every one wished to have a portrait of our saint; and on all that were produced just after his death he is called *il Beato*. In some of them his head is encircled with those luminous rays which are the signs of recognized sanctity; others record some one of his more remarkable miracles. Nor did ecclesiastical authority, always vigilant in repressing unauthorized devotions, interpose to prevent these things; they were either benignantly connived at, or done with express permission. Pope Clement himself always kept on his table a picture of Philip, in addition to the portrait of him which hung in his private room with those of other saints, with no other distinction than that a veil was drawn over it.

In regard of these likenesses of Philip it is probable

that they served rather to attest and to nourish the great devotion felt towards him, than to reflect credit on their engravers. Still it is reasonable to believe that we really possess the true type and expression of Philip's countenance; for all these portraits were taken, with greater or less correctness, from the cast made of his features after death. There were also a few portraits of him in Rome, taken in his lifetime; and Cardinal Paleotto, as we know, took great pains to secure a faithful likeness of the holy old man to serve as a frontispiece to his book, *de bono senectutis*, of which mention has been already made.

Meanwhile the manifestations of devotion at Philip's tomb increased day by day. It was not merely the poor who loved to pray before it, but nobles, prelates, and cardinals. Many kissed the wall which hid his remains from their sight, others took away with them some of the mortar of it as a relic, and many treasured some of the oil of the lamp which burned there continually, or of the flowers strewn before it in profusion. Many made it a point of devotion to make this pilgrimage daily, and some of these, persons of the greatest distinction, would come barefoot. Together with these outward demonstrations of devotion there grew up a greater confidence in the power of his intercession with God, and greater fervour in imploring it. And God, who is glorified in all His saints, and who would glorify this His good and faithful servant, gave him grace to work miracles in great number. Gallonio records those which were vouchsafed during the first year after the saint's death, resting upon the sworn testimony of those in whose behalf they were wrought, and adding that of most of them he was himself an eye-witness.

One of the first healed by the intercession of Philip was his friend Claudio Neri, who was grievously tormented with gout. Fra Simone, a Capuchin, invoked Philip with great fervour, and made a vow to fast every year on his vigil, and was at once freed from a rheumatic affection in the arms, from which he had long suffered, and which prevented him from saying mass. Ridolfo Silvestri, a learned physician, attests in a votive tablet he suspended at the saint's tomb, as well as in the process, that he was cured of a mortal and very painful disease by invoking the aid of Philip, whom he had sometimes attended in his lifetime. A young man, who was tempted to sin, was freed from the temptation and moved to great compunction of heart by hearing Philip's voice saying to him: "Take good heed what you do!" Fiammetta Nannoni was run over by a coach, and her leg was crushed, and for many months she found no relief; she invoked Philip and made a vow in his honour, and was cured instantaneously. Not long after, she had recourse to the saint again with great faith, and he appeared to her and healed her of a disease in her breast. Isabella Priorati, a noble lady of Vincenza, and Eugenia Mansueti, were cured of violent fever by calling upon Philip and venerating a relic of him; and the same grace was vouchsafed to Claudio Rangone, afterwards bishop of Piacenza. Settimia Neri was suffering excruciating pain in her left eye, which had been accidentally wounded with the almost red-hot nozzle of a pair of bellows. In her anguish she turned with faith to Philip, her parents applied a relic of him to the injured eye and made a vow in his honour; the next morning she awoke from a quiet sleep perfectly cured. Evangelista Mariolio invoked Philip, and was

miraculously cured of a violent fever, attended with severe pain. A nun of Viterbo, whose name was Giulia, prayed to Philip, and obtained from him a cure long sought in vain from the physicians. A brother of the Oratory in Palermo was freed by a relic of Philip from a dangerous fever. Antonio Parno, a Genoese, was apparently dying in great agony from an abscess in the bowels. Some of the saint's hair was hung about his neck, and he commended himself with earnest faith to his intercession; the pain at once passed away, and the next day he was walking about the city. And a lady who had suffered for thirty-three months from quartan ague was restored by invoking Philip's name.

Drusilla, wife of Antonio Fantini, had fallen from an open gallery into the court below, and struck her head with violence against some pieces of iron; her lower lip was cut through in three places, her right eye was so much injured that it protruded from its socket and her sight was destroyed; her nose was crushed and her teeth broken, and blood flowed copiously from her mouth. She lay as one dead, motionless and still, and altogether insensible. She was taken up and laid on a bed, and her husband was sent for. Antonio received the sad message in the street, and before returning to his house he ran to the Vallicella, and most earnestly implored the aid of Philip, and made a vow in his honour if his beloved wife were restored to him again. Meanwhile the surgeon arrived, and after examining the several injuries, said that she could not recover, and that there was no use in applying any remedy. Still she lingered on for fifteen days without giving any sign of consciousness, and day by day her husband went to Philip's tomb, and prayed with fervour and

faith. At length one day, while he was pouring out his soul to the saint and renewing his vow, Drusilla had a vision. Philip appeared to her; she knew him at once, for he had been her confessor for many years; he was vested as a priest, and all around him was the glory of Paradise. At this blessed sight she humbly entreated him to restore her to health; and it seemed to her that Philip answered: "Fear not; thou wilt not die this time." And in that instant all her wounds in head and lip and eye and hand were healed; there remained only a swelling on the knee, and the surgeon spoke of amputating her leg; but she again commended herself to the saint with such loving trust, that he appeared to her again in the same glory as at first, and she found the swelling gone. Still her constitution was shattered by the shock of her fall, and she felt too weak to attend to her household duties; and then a third time the saint manifested himself to her, and left her in perfect health and strength.

Gallonio relates another miracle in these terms: Towards the end of October, in this same year, 1595, Caterina Lozio was seized with a dangerous illness. She was eight months advanced in her pregnancy, and the severity of her sufferings brought on premature confinement; her child was born dead. The midwife used every means she could think of to revive the little creature, but in vain; the child had been for some time dead. She then began to invoke the Madonna; and remembering that she had with her some of the hair of our saint, towards whom she had a singular devotion, she laid this hair on the body of the dead infant and said: "O blessed Philip, ask the Madonna to restore this babe to life, that I may at least give it holy baptism!" Immediately the child began to struggle into

life, and was baptized by the name of Giovan Pietro; it lived only twenty days—its mother had died five days after its birth.

Tidings of the many and wonderful miracles wrought by Philip's intercession passed from mouth to mouth, and the whole city was full of them. People began to connect them in their minds with the unobtrusive holiness of his life; they recalled his virtues and the great things he had done, and while they glorified God they felt that Philip was a saint. In the days of old he would have been at once acclaimed a saint by the universal voice of the people of Rome; but the Church in her wary reverence has enacted strict and wise rules in regard of the canonization of the servants of God, and proceeds slowly and cautiously. And thus not one of the established rules was set aside in Philip's case, nor was there the slightest abatement in the rigour of the processes. Still when the 26th May 1596 came round, it never occurred to any one that the usual anniversary Mass of Requiem should be sung. Quite spontaneously and instinctively the day was kept at the Vallicella as a solemn feast; the concourse of people was immense, and prelates and cardinals came in numbers to do honour to the memory of the blessed Father. The mass of the day was sung, and after Vespers there was a sermon in his praise; the day was thus kept year by year until his beatification.

Three years later the fathers felt a great desire to turn into a chapel the room in which the saint had lived. They took counsel with Alessandro Cardinal dei Medici on it, and then they placed in the little room the altar at which Philip had been wont to say mass, and above it a portrait of the saint in the act of recommending the Congregation to the Blessed Virgin

Mary. They entrusted this portrait to the celebrated Cristofano Roncalli, called *il Pomarancio,* who also adorned the walls around with representations of some of Philip's miracles. And then, at the instance of Cardinals Borromeo and Baronio, as well as of the abbate Maffa, at that time apostolic visitor, permission was granted on the 29th March 1598, to celebrate mass in it. Nor was his tomb forgotten; on the 26th January 1599, Alfonso Visconte, bishop of Cervia and afterwards cardinal, gave for its adornment some magnificent drapery of crimson velvet embroidered with gold and flowers, which was part of the spoils taken from Sisan Pasha, the Turkish admiral.

Among the many who cherished an exceeding love and veneration for Philip in his lifetime, one of the most devoted was a Florentine, Nero del Nero, baron of Porcigliano. Philip loved him greatly in return; and, whenever he saw him cast down or troubled, he would throw his arms around his neck and embrace him with such loving sympathy, that Nero would burst into tears, and feel quite consoled and strengthened. When Philip passed away from earth to heaven, none lamented him more bitterly than Nero. He was often seen at Philip's tomb, his eyes suffused with tears, and he would open his heart to the saint and tell him all his cares and temptations just as when he was alive. He was a rich man, and had no son; and in his zeal to do honour to his beloved Father Philip, he resolved to have his body placed in a rich and fair coffin of silver. He mentioned his intention to the fathers, and they deemed it advisable to see first what state the holy body was in; and for this purpose they had the wall taken down on the 9th March 1599, four years after Philip's death. When they opened the coffin they

found the body covered with cobwebs and dust, which had got in through a crack in the lid; the vestments were all decayed, and the chasuble crumbled away when touched; the brass plate itself, which bore his name, was covered with verdigris; and they feared that they would find the body of their beloved father mouldered into dust. But soon their sorrow was turned into gladness; they found the body in almost perfect preservation, and retaining its natural colour, and even the breast and stomach were fresh and moist and white. Not the fathers alone, but the physicians, Antonio Porto and Ridolfo Silvestri, and the celebrated Cesalpino, regarded this preservation as above the order of nature, and undoubtedly miraculous. They felt also a singular joy that there was no odour of death or decay, and that instead of repugnance and shrinking they were all conscious of a sweet and tender devotion.

On the 13th May there was a beautiful and touching ceremony at the Vallicella. Philip's body, thus fresh and incorrupt, was laid in a new coffin of cypress wood richly adorned, on a mattress of red silk, and over it was placed a coverlet of the same colour. All the fathers and brothers of the congregation were there, to see and venerate the body of their beloved founder; and all wept rather for joy than for sadness, congratulating one another on the possession of a treasure so great. There were also present Cardinals Borromeo, Medici, and Baronio, sharing and exulting in the gladness of this family festival. Philip was clothed with the chasuble in which he had said his last mass; Cardinal dei Medici drew from his finger a rich ring, in which was a large sapphire, and put it on the finger of the saint; on his breast was laid a crucifix of costly workmanship, sent for that purpose by Giulio Sansedonio, bishop of

Grosseto;[1] and over all were strewn artificial flowers. And then the coffin was closed, and placed in the same little chapel over the arch, where it remained until the 24th May 1602.

As time went on, Nero del Nero felt his devotion to Philip grow deeper and warmer; he chose him as the patron saint and protector of his family, and with the consent of Philip's surviving sister, he added to his coat-of-arms that of the Neri of Castelfranco, which are three stars of gold on a field azure. Our readers will not have forgotten that, when Philip was a boy, he loved to pray and recite psalms with his little sister Elisabetta. In 1599 this sister was more than eighty years of age, and the only surviving member of the family of the Neri, except two nieces who were nuns. She readily gave Nero del Nero permission to unite the arms of his beloved patron with those of the Barons of Porcigliano, and this was done by a formal and public deed. Amidst his wealth and prosperity Nero had one bitter and abiding sorrow. Though he had been married for many years, God had not granted him a son to perpetuate his name and his race. Emboldened at length by his love and faith, he turned to Philip and told him the longing of his heart: nor did he ask in vain, for erelong a son was granted him, to whom, in grateful memory of this signal grace, he gave the name of Philip.

It now seemed to Nero del Nero a feeble and altogether inadequate expression of his gratitude and devotion that he should provide a coffin of silver for

[1] This crucifix remained thus on the breast of the saint until 1639, when his body was, for greater security, laid in a coffin of iron. It was then given by the fathers to the Marchesa Niccolini, wife of the Tuscan ambassador, by whom it was subsequently presented to the fathers of the Oratory of Florence, who still treasure it with pride.

Philip's body; he resolved that it would be more for the glory of God that he should build in the Vallicella a chapel not unworthy of a saint so mighty with God and so benignant; and therefore, on the 6th July 1600, he began the exquisitely gorgeous chapel in which the body of S. Philip now rests. It is a chapel of wonderful beauty. Its plan is an irregular octagon; if we look up, our eyes rest on a graceful cupola, supported by four columns of Sicilian alabaster, and enriched with gilded mouldings and rosettes of mother-of-pearl, on a ground of ultra-marine blue. The walls are inlaid with jasper, agate, and the finest and rarest marbles, in patterns of singular delicacy, and they are painted by Pomarancio with scenes from the life of the saint. The pavement is of rose alabaster and other precious stones, with a green oriental jasper of unusual size in the centre, and jaspers of other kinds around it. The entrance to the chapel is under a broad round arch, sheathed with marbles of rare quality and beauty. Over the altar, in a broad richly burnished frame, is a portrait of the saint in mosaic, copied from the celebrated painting by Guido. Such is S. Philip's chapel, rich, delicate, and cheerful, as if it would image forth his character. The first stone was laid by Cardinal Tarugi, who placed in it a leaden box containing twelve medals of S. Philip in brass, and a larger one in silver, with this inscription: *B. Philippus Nerius, Florentinus, Congregationis Oratorii Fundator, obiit Romæ, anno* 1595. With these was deposited also a large leaden tablet, on which was engraved in Latin: "This chapel, in honour of the Blessed Philip Neri of Florence, Founder of the Congregation of the Oratory, was built from its foundations, and adorned at his own expense, by Nero del Nero, a noble Florentine, to mark his

singular devotion to that blessed man; in the year of Jubilee 1600, in the month of July, on the octave day of the feast of the holy Apostles, Peter and Paul, Clement VIII. being Pope, and in the ninth year of his pontificate."

Eighteen months passed away, and Nero del Nero was still devising new enrichments for the chapel of his beloved patron, when his little Philip fell ill of small-pox, and was soon reduced to such a state of weakness that he could not speak and seemed hardly to breathe. The physicians had declared his state hopeless, and his death was expected from one moment to another. The poor father was crushed with grief, and withdrew into another room that he might not see his son die; and there he threw himself on a bed, and exclaimed in the anguish of his heart: "Ah, my blessed Father, must it then be that the first thing I do in the chapel I am building in your honour should be to bury therein my son, my only son, whom I owed to your intercession!" He had scarcely uttered these words, when the dying child opened his eyes as if waking from sleep, and cried out three or four times: "*Babbo, babbo!* Papa, papa." The Countess of Pitigliano, his sister, ran at once to bring their father, and, as soon as the little Philip saw him, he said, with a voice loud enough to be heard by all in the room: "*Babbo*, I am quite well now; the *nonno* has made me well." The child meant the blessed Philip, whose name he bore, and whom he had been taught to call his *nonno*, or godfather. With a view to test the truth of what the child said, Nero asked him if he meant his *nonna*, his godmother; but little Philip cried out again, and louder than before: "No, no; the *nonno*, the *nonno*." A portrait of the saint was then shown him, and he cried out again with glee: "He, he

made me well." His father then asked him how the *nonno* had cured him, and then the boy touched his head, to signify that the saint had laid his blessed hand on his head and so restored him to health. He then took some nourishment, after which he slept soundly, and awoke quite well and strong.

In 1600, Gallonio published the first Life of Philip in Latin. His object was not so much to write a biography properly so called, as to prepare the way for his canonization by showing that he was a saint, by relating his miracles, and exhibiting his supernatural virtues. It is a book of exceeding value, for Gallonio was not only a man of rare piety and learning, but he was for many years a witness of the wonders he records. Meanwhile God continued to show signs and wonders at the intercession of His servant, and the process of his beatification naturally brought vividly back the memory of all that he had done and said during his life, and gave to all a deeper meaning. His congregation, too, was seen to be flourishing and in honour. Baronio and Tarugi had been created Cardinals, and the latter was transferred to the archbishopric of Siena, while Bordini was removed from the small see of Cavaillon to that of Avignon. The fathers of the Vallicella continued to live in harmony and peace, and their lives were seen to be moulded on that of their blessed Father, whose spirit still pervaded the whole house. The congregation was prospering in Naples; the stately church of the Girolamini was rising rapidly, and Cardinal Tarugi obtained from Cosmo, Grand Duke of Tuscany, permission to take from the quarries of the island of Giglio the twelve magnificent pillars of granite which are so striking a feature of the Church.

In 1602 the chapel of S. Philip was finished, with

the exception of some lesser details of ornamentation; and, on the 24th May, the body of the saint was removed into it with great reverence and solemnity, although privately. Early in the morning it was borne into the sacristy, where it remained all the day on a richly adorned bier or couch, and amidst the blaze of many lights. In the evening after the Oratory the doors of the church were closed to prevent inconvenience from the great concourse of people, and the body was then carried round the church in procession on the shoulders of the six senior fathers of the congregation, who were, fathers Flaminio Ricci the superior, Angelo Velli, Pietro Perrachioni, Pompeo Pateri, Francesco Soto, and Tommaso Bozio. Besides the fathers and brothers of the house, some cardinals and prelates and about two hundred others were allowed to take part in the ceremony; all bearing lighted torches, and singing devoutly during the procession. The body was then placed in the middle of the chapel, and, after *Te Deum* had been sung, it was laid in the place destined for its rest under the altar. In 1639 the coffin was opened in order to take out some relics for the Congregation of Naples, and, to the joy and consolation of all, the holy body was again found to be incorrupt. It was then enclosed in a coffin of wrought iron, so constructed that, when closed, it could not be again opened, and this was then covered with silver. And thus it has remained to our own day.[1]

We need not follow further the steps taken for the

[1] The following inscription was placed on the tomb: *Corpus S. Philippi Nerii Congregationis Oratorii Fundatoris ab ipso dormitionis die annos quatuor et quadraginta incorruptum divina virtute servatum, oculis fidelium expositum, a dilectis in Christo filiis sub ejusdem Patris Altari perpetuæ sepulturæ more majorum commendatum est anno salutis* MDCXXXVIII. *Urbani Papæ* VIII, XVI. *Indictione* VII. *Idibus Aprilis.*

beatification and canonization of our beloved saint. The decree of his beatification was given by Pope Paul V. on the 25th May 1615; and on the 12th March 1622, the feast of S. Gregory the Great, he was canonized by Pope Gregory XV. together with the Blessed Isidore Agricola, Ignatius Loyola, Francis Xavier, and Teresa. The history and details of this crowning glory of our saint are minutely and clearly given by Bacci. We should not forget that before this last solemn decision of the Church, twenty-five years had been spent in collecting every scattered notice and incident of Philip's life; process after process had been formed; his virtues were discussed and tested, one by one; objections were proposed and met; difficulties were suggested and solved; alleged facts were tested again and again with most anxious care; several hundred witnesses were examined on oath; some miracles were definitively approved as certain, while others were left to the pious belief of the faithful. All this was done by many men, of highest eminence for sanctity as well as learning and sagacity, foremost amongst whom was the Venerable Cardinal Bellarmine. And why is all this? Our mother the Church does not surely take such anxious pains to gain for her greatest and holiest sons the praise of men; her end is to exhibit and attest the glory of Jesus in His saints; to say to her children—here is one who was perfectly moulded on the type of all human perfection, one whom you would do well to study and to imitate, to venerate and to love. Before the throne on which sits the Lamb of God he is praying for you; and he will pray for your children and your children's children so long as the sun shall rise upon this earth, so long as there is upon it one soul that needs the mercy and forgiveness of God. The world may

affect to ignore the glory decreed to her elect children by the most august society of men on earth, but it feels still their true and abiding grandeur; and the Church goes quietly on its way, rejoicing and blessing God, who has given such power to men.

It is beautiful to see that not only the Pope and the rulers of the Church of God, but whole nations and sovereign princes, exulted in Philip's peaceful triumph. France was mindful of benefits received, nor did Tuscany forget that Philip was a son of Florence. Charles Gonzaga, duke of Nevers, extraordinary ambassador in 1608 from Henry IV. to the Pope, made most urgent request, in the name of the king and the whole nation of France, for Philip's beatification. These entreaties were also repeated by Louis XIII., the successor of Henry IV., by Mary of Medicis, his mother; by Ferdinand, Grand Duke of Tuscany, and after his death by his son Cosmo; as well as by Maximilian, duke of Bavaria, and by the duke of Nevers on his own behalf, and that of Catherine of Lorraine his wife; for he remembered that he had once gone to confession to Philip, and when in Rome had prayed fervently at the saint's tomb. It was remarked, too, that while the senate and people of Rome, and all its most illustrious personages, eagerly demanded Philip's beatification, his own sons alone were inactive and almost remiss; they deliberately left in the hands of God the care of Philip's glory, and chose for themselves his own spirit of modesty and humility.

Nor did the miraculous attestations of Philip's sanctity cease; on the contrary, they increased after his canonization, as morning brightens into day. Bacci wrote his life of our saint within a year of his canonization, and the sixth and longest division of it treats of

those miracles alone which were wrought after his death. To his ever-fresh and fascinating pages we refer the reader who would know what God wrought in those twenty-eight years through Philip's intercession. If we examine them we find that there are more than two hundred miracles, extracted from the processes, and almost all miracles of healing, with one or two more wonderful still. The power of the saint seems to be invariably put forth in relief of suffering, the suffering which is raised and dignified by faith and hope. And what mighty instruments in the hands of God are the smallest relics of our blessed Father, his hair, the stains left by his blood, his rosary, or his berretta ; even the reading his Life, the making a vow in his honour, the visiting his tomb or invoking him, or even venerating some representation of him ! In all these cases, surely, we must not look only at the outward investment of the miracle, but at the infinite goodness and yearning tenderness of the Sacred Heart. It is God *who alone doeth wondrous things*, and His greatness and power are then most clearly manifested when He chooses as their instrument something which, apart from Him as Creator, would not exist at all, and, apart from Him as Redeemer, would be nothing but the fragment of an utter ruin.

Meanwhile our saint has not forgotten his beloved sons of the Oratory. His spirit, and it was pre-eminently the spirit of Jesus Christ, is with them still, and they carry on his great mission of charity towards all. During these years the congregation flourished and increased as a tree watered from a living and unfailing source. At the death of our saint there were seven houses of the congregation; besides those of Rome, Naples, Sanseverino, and Lucca, of which we have

already spoken, those of Fermo, Palermo, and Camerino, had been founded. That of Fermo owed its origin to Domenico Pinelli, bishop of that city; F. Flaminio Ricci aided greatly in its foundation, and it numbered amongst its sons F. Antonio Grassi, for whose beatification steps are now being taken in Rome. The Congregation of Palermo, which was subsequently one of the most important, was founded in 1593 by F. Pietro Pozzo, a Sicilian, who went thither, in the first instance, for the recovery of his health, and was then called by God to this great work. From the Oratory of Palermo sprang those of Genoa, Trapani, and Castelvetrano. In 1594 F. Angelo Matteucci, who had become blind, and was for some time only an acolyte, founded the Oratory of Camerino, out of which came those of Matelica and Montecchio. This was the position of Philip's congregation when he died.

But in 1622, when it pleased God to glorify Philip in presence of the whole Church, the Congregation had greatly increased in numbers, especially in Rome, Naples, and Palermo, and the several houses were now more numerous. In 1598 F. Girolamo Gabrielli had erected in Fano an Oratory with a very celebrated church and library, and a fine museum of ancient medals; and in that same year the house of Brescia was set up by the care and efforts of Baronio. In 1605 Camerata, near Girgenti in Sicily, had its congregation of *Filippini;* Aquila, in the Abruzzi, followed its example in 1607, and Trapani and Agnone in 1608. This house of Agnone deserves more than a passing mention, for it was there that S. Francesco Caracciolo fell asleep in the Lord. In 1613 the congregation extended its branches to the north of Italy. In that

year was founded the house of Casale di Monferrato, by the zeal of F. Giacinto of Casale, a Capuchin, who collected large offerings from the Pope and other sovereign princes, and with them built a church of unusual splendour. In the following year, 1614, Bologna, Perugia, and Ripa Transona possessed their houses of the Oratory, of which that of Bologna was the most illustrious. And in the years following we find congregations springing into being at Corleone, Fossombrone, and Città di Castello, as well as at Montaigne in Brabant. Of the congregations founded subsequently to the canonization of the saint a list is given in an appendix; but the houses erected at Birmingham and London, in England, about the middle of the present century, have a peculiar claim on our attention. In them the spirit of S. Philip lives on, and they are renewing amongst that busy people his apostolate in Rome. Had they done no more than give us F. Faber and Cardinal Newman, they would have done enough for their glory. It is an especial joy to note that these two great men who have now entered into their rest, remind us in so many ways of our own S. Philip, and have succeeded in making him better known and loved, not by us alone, but by the protestants themselves amongst whom their lot is cast.

The fine arts contributed, also, in their measure, to keep alive the memory of our saint and to adorn his triumph. The history of art is, indeed, closely bound up with the history of the Church; to the Church art owes its highest and purest inspirations, and its power to touch and console. Under her guidance it speaks to our hearts words of faith and hope; of every image it impresses upon us, whether by sculpture, or

painting, or music, we may say, as Dante says of the angel of the Incarnation:

> He did not seem an image that is silent;
> One would have sworn that he was saying *Ave!*

Nor will this divine language of art be ever quite forgotten amongst men, even though its highest utterances are no longer heard. At the close of the sixteenth century painting had so far declined that it could not clothe Philip with the heavenly radiance which artists of an earlier time had thrown around the saints their contemporaries; but it reverently made the attempt, and not without success.

Baroccio, Guido Reni, Pomarancio, Pietro da Cortona, Guercino, Luca Giordano, and Solimene, all strove to do honour to Philip. Baroccio has left us a *Pippo buono* which has about it an air and a fragrance as of Paradise, and Guido's portrait of our saint in ecstasy is perfect in conception and execution. This grand painting was several times repeated by Guido himself; one copy of it is now in Philip's room at the Vallicella, and is faithfully reproduced in the beautiful mosaic of his chapel, and another graces the altar of S. Philip's chapel in the church of the Girolamini at Naples. Pomarancio, as we have seen, decorated the saint's room, when it was made into a chapel, with scenes from his life; and in the same chapel is a noble portrait of the saint in ecstasy while saying mass, with the server peeping cautiously in to see whether he dare enter. The vault of the apse of the Vallicella is painted in fresco by the same artist; the saint is invoking our blessed Lady, who is advancing to sustain the falling roof of the older church. Guercino, who was one of the glories of the Bolognese school, left

at the Vallicella a striking portrait of Philip. Giordano often painted our saint, and always with the hand of a master; his noblest representation of him, all glorious in heaven and surrounded with angels, is on the ceiling of the sacristy of the Girolamini; and the chapel of S. Philip in the same church was adorned by Solimene with incidents from the saint's life.

The noblest work of sculpture which bears the name of the new Apostle of Rome is his colossal statue by Algardi, in the sacristy of the Vallicella. The marble glows with life, and well expresses the blended greatness and tenderness of the saint. Thus christian art delighted to honour the memory of the humble saint who loved it so well, and who had such trust in its power for good.

And now I close my book, and leave the sweet companionship of my dear saint. I implore him to be ever as present to my mind and my heart as he has been during the time I have devoted to this record of his life. Even that mighty Father could obtain for me no higher gift than this; for this would sustain my hope that I may one day cast myself at his feet in heaven, and with him through all eternity bless the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, one God, blessed for evermore. Amen.

PRAYER OF BARONIO TO S. PHILIP.

Vol. II. p. 438.

Look down from heaven, O holy Father, from that lofty mountain into this our lowly valley, from that still and peaceful haven on this wild and raging sea, and with those gracious eyes wherewith, now all darkness of this world is swept away, thou lookest upon and clearly seest all things, behold and visit, O most watchful guardian, this thy vine which thy right hand hath set and planted, with so great toil and pains and care. Wherefore, to thee we fly for refuge, we seek for aid from thee; to thee we give up ourselves wholly and without reserve, thee we avouch our patron and defender. Take thou then in hand the cause of our salvation, care for us thy clients: Thee we all acclaim our leader; take thou command of this thine army striving hard against the onset of the devil. In thy hands, O most tender ruler, we place the guidance of our lives. Steer thou this thy little bark; and from thy place on high keep far from us all rocks of evil passion; so that, with thee our captain and our guide, we may come in safety to that haven of eternal life. Amen.

APPENDIX.

No. I.—Vol. I. p. 50.

The Last Will of Ser Francesco Neri.

"Ser Francesco, son of Philip Neri of Castel Franco, a prudent and discreet man, being ill in body, directed that he should be buried with his forefathers in the Church of S. Michele Berteldi, with such ceremony and cost as shall seem fit to his hereinafter named heirs." Here follow the names of some of these heirs. "In regard of all his other goods, he wills and appoints Messer Philip, a priest, his son, to be his sole heir for the term of his natural life; and, at his death, all shall be divided equally between the Signora Caterina, wife of Barnaba Tregui, and the Signora Elisabetta, widow of the late Antonio Donato Cioni, his daughters," &c.

This will was executed on the 26th September of the year 1559, in Florence, Via del Sole, Ward of S. Pancrazio, in the house of Bastiano, son of Barnaba Tregui, silk-merchant, and husband of Caterina, sister of S. Philip. The deed was drawn up by Ser Francesco Ricchi.

It is not true, then, that our saint was disinherited by his father, as is supposed by most of his biographers; he voluntarily, and, by a public deed, renounced his inheritance in favour of his sisters. Manni has been unable to trace this deed itself, but a document drawn up on the 3d September 1561, by the notary, Gasparre Balchi, begins as follows: "Whereas Ser Francesco Filippo Neri, father of the Signora Caterina, departed this life about two years ago, leaving a son, Messer Filippo, and two daughters, the aforesaid Signora Caterina and the Signora Elisabetta; and whereas he had, by his last will, appointed the aforesaid Messer Filippo, his son, heir of all his goods for the term of his natural life, with reversion after his death to the aforesaid Caterina and Elisabetta, &c., &c. *And whereas the aforesaid Messer Filippo did, at that time, by a public instrument and deed, renounce the inheritance of the said Ser Francesco, &c., &c.*"

No. II.—Vol. I. p. 67.

S. PHILIP'S SONNETS.

I.

Se l'anima ha da Dio l'esser perfetto,
Sendo, com' è, creata in un istante,
E non con mezzo di cagion cotante ;
Come vincer la dee mortal oggetto ?
Là 've speme, desio, gaudio e dispetto
La fanno tanto da sè stessa errante,
Sì che non veggia, e l'ha pur sempre innante,
Chi bear la potria sol con l'aspetto.
Como ponno le parti esser rubelle
Alla parte miglior nè consentire ?
E questa servir dee, comandar quelle ?
Qual prigion la ritien ch'indi partire
Non possa, e al fin col piè calcar le stelle,
E viver sempre in Dio, e a sè morire ?

II.

Amo, e non posso non amarvi, quando
Resto cotanto vinto dal desio,
Che 'l mio nel vostro, e'l vostro amor nel mio,
Anzi ch 'io in voi, voi in me, ci andiam cangiando.
E tempo ben saria veder il quando
Ch' alfin io esca d' esto carcer rio,
Di così folle e così cieco oblio,
Dov' io mi trovo e di me stesso in bando.
Ride la terra e 'l cielo e l' ora e i rami,
Stan queti i venti, e son tranquille l' onde,
E 'l sol mai sì lucente non apparse :
Cantan gli augei : Chi dunque è che non ami
E non gioisca ?—Io sol : che non risponde
La gioia a le mie forze infirme e scarse.

For this graceful translation of these two sonnets I am indebted to F. Henry Ignatius Dudley Ryder, now Superior of the Birmingham Oratory.

I.

The soul derives from God her being high,
In one keen instant out of nothing brought,
Not painfully through second causes wrought;
How should she, then, submit to things that die?
To hope, desire, to joy, to enmity;
To her confusion by these guides mistaught,
Of One confronting her she knoweth naught,
One glimpse of Whom would lift her to the sky.
How should the baser nature dare rebel
Against the higher, nor, as meet, consent
To do its bidding, but essay to quell?
Why prison bars the aspiring soul prevent
From leaving earth, above the stars to dwell,
To die to self, to live to God, intent?

II.

I love, and loving must love ceaselessly,
So whole a conquest in me love hath won;
My love to Thee, Thy love to me doth run,
In Thee I live, and Thou dost live in me.
Surely the day is nigh when I may flee
From this dark gaol, for ever to have done
With vanity and blind oblivion,
Where, exiled from myself, I used to be.
Earth laughs and sky, green branches and soft air,
The winds are quiet, and the water still,
No sun before has shed so bright a day;
The gay birds sing, love's joy is everywhere;
My heart alone has no responsive thrill,
My powers flag and shrink from joy away.

It is doubtful whether this sonnet, so full of quaint conceits, was written by S. Philip. See vol. i. p. 67.

Chi non v' ha, Bernardino, amato ed ama,
Altro non ami. E se pur vuol amare,
Ama il mal non il bene, e 'l bene amare
Lasci a chi non il mal ma il ben sol ama.
Perchè tutto quel ben che di buon s' ama
E si puote e a ragion si deve amare,
È tutto in voi. Dunque io voi solo amare
Deggio, non amando io 'l mal che non s' ama.
Così spero, mercè di tal amare,
Quel frutto accorre, amato da chi ama ;
Che quant' io v' amo, e voi m' abbiate a amare
Anzi s' è ver, com' è ver, che chi ama
Si trasformi in l'amato, il nostro amare
Voi l' amante farà me quel che s' ama.

No. III.—Letters of S. Philip Neri.

I.

To Messer Francesco Vai, Prato.

He exhorts this his spiritual son to return to Rome, and gives him some counsels.

Jesu Maria! I don't know whether I ought to call you *carissimo*, as people do at the beginning of a letter, since you have the heart to stay away from us all—from father, friends, and brothers, because of the war, and to keep a whole skin. Good sons are wont to help their father in his need with their substance, their strength, and their life. I will not speak of him who, though he had no knowledge of Christ, gave himself up to bondage to redeem the dead body of his father; nor will I speak of many others whose example would cover you with confusion, seeing that you, who profess to be a spiritual man, hang back irresolute because of what people say, and tremble for your own safety, when you ought to have caught at an occasion like this of coming, and of gaining, if so it were, the crown of martyrdom. From this one may see that you have not as yet made a beginning; for death daunts those alone who are still in their sins, and not those who, like S. Paul, desire to die and be with Christ, and who, like Job, lament that their days are so lengthened out, though they long to die. And in truth, one of the greatest crosses a person could have to bear, if he were such as I should like to see you, is the not dying for Christ, as perchance you might in coming hither. Every one would like to stand on Mount Tabor and gaze on Christ in His transfiguration, but very few are willing to go up with Him to Jerusalem, and to keep Him company to Calvary. It is in the fire of tribulations that a true christian is known; for as to the consolations you had with Brother Alexis on your journey, there is nothing wonderful in your reading, or shedding a few poor tears, or feeling some little glow of devotion more than usual. Christ was only drawing you on with this sweet call to bear some little of His cross. Spiritual persons generally have the sweet first, and then the bitter; wherefore put away all that lukewarmness, take off the mask from yourself, bear the cross, and don't make the cross bear you. Furthermore be discreet, not giving trouble to any one, and see to it that others should rather receive from you than you from them, for a spiritual man must possess only to be able to give; and if, as you write, you have met with so much condescension and kindness, do you on your part learn to be gracious and lowly; and if the friend of whom you speak so highly kept you nine days in Florence because you

once kept him one day in Prato, remember you are bound to keep him there in return eighty-one days. But since I have, to my sorrow, a secretary who is not too knowing, and has just memory enough to spoil the best things of Solomon himself, I must end my letter, and the rather that I am in bed, sick and under the visitation of God. Pray to God, and with this I will conclude, that I may gather from this some fruit for my soul. Do not forget, however, to commend me to Sister Caterina, and ask her to pray that I may gain souls for God, and not bury what talents I have in the earth, be they five or ten, three or one. Commend me, too, to Messer Giovanni Simoni, and ask him not to forget me, and when you go to Florence commend me to Messer Francesco Buonsignori.

With all this I do not wish, as I told you when you went away, that you should put yourself to inconvenience to come here, so only you continue well in soul and body, and feel you have means of advancing, and persons to direct you. I leave you to decide whether you will come; only I assure you that with us there is nothing to fear from the war, so that you must not let fear turn you back. Pray to God for me, for I am sick in body, and in soul not at all as I should like to be. Simone and Lodovico, who have written this letter for me, send you their best remembrances. —Yours,

PHILIP NERI.

From ROME, *this 6th November* 1556.

II.

TO MADONNA FIORA RAGNI, NAPLES.

He exhorts her to the practice of virtues.

Although I never write to any one I cannot help doing so to Madonna Fiora, who is as it were my first-born daughter, desiring greatly that she may indeed flower, and that after the flowers may come good fruit—fruit of humility, fruit of patience, fruit of all virtues; so that she may be the dwelling-place and vessel of the Holy Ghost, as those are wont to be who go often to communion. If this were not so I would not have you for a daughter; or if a daughter, then a daughter unpleasing and repulsive, and one against whom I should have to appear in the day of judgment. May God avert this, and may He clothe you with flowers that shall mature into fruit, and make you so glow with fire that your poor unworthy father who is dying of cold may be able to warm himself at it. I have no more to say.—Wholly yours,

PHILIP NERI.

ROME, *27th June* 1572.

III.

To a Person Unknown, in Florence.

He asks him to help his sister Elisabetta in a misunderstanding.

Most Respected Signor,—Isabella Cioni my sister has some misunderstanding with the reverend sisters of San Vincenzo in Prato, and has great confidence in your kindness and ability, that you both can and will help her; and, as she knows that your lordship is good enough to feel some affection for me, she entreats me to commend her case to you. And I, that I may not disappoint her desire or fail in my duty, have undertaken to do so, feeling sure that your courtesy will not allow either my sister or me to be deceived in the good opinion we have of you. I commend her, then, to your lordship most earnestly, and entreat you to look into her case, and if her claims are just, to counsel and aid her as you may deem best; and if otherwise, to dissuade her from going to law. In a word, I ask you to give her what counsel and direction you yourself would follow in such a case, and that we shall regard as wisest and best. And since I cannot recompense you in temporal things for your trouble and kindness, I will try to repay you in things spiritual, praying and getting others to pray to God for you that you may ever abide and grow in His holy grace. And thus I conclude, commending myself to you most cordially.—Your lordship's most affectionate

Philip Neri.

From Rome, *29th October* 1574.

IV.

To Sister Maria Vittoria Tregui, Nun at S. Peter Martyr's, Florence.

He sends her some rosaries.

Niece, whom I love as a daughter, together with this letter will be delivered to you the hundred and thirty rosaries you asked me for a few days ago, blessed and indulgenced by our Lord the Pope. The reasons of my delay in gratifying your wish are, first, that I received your letter later than you expected, and then, that I have had no opportunity of sending them to you by a trustworthy person. Thirty of the rosaries are larger than the

others, and the beads are oval, which seems to me better than round, and more fitted to give to your superiors. If your nuns are not satisfied with the material of the rosaries they ought anyhow to be satisfied with the great graces attached to them, for they are the greatest his Holiness has ever granted, and granted to very few; wherefore they are bound to feel very grateful to him, and to pray to God for him, as I promised him they would when I asked him for these indulgences. And, moreover, I entreat them to do the same for me, through whom they have got these favours; and you especially, more than the others, as you are bound to do, being my niece, for whom I never fail to pray, and whom I commend without ceasing to our Lord, that He may grant you grace and courage to persevere in the life you have begun, and take out of your heart all earthly love, and fill it with His own divine and heavenly love, so that keeping yourself pure in soul and in body, and mortifying your will with holy obedience (a thing I urge on you above all others) you may become His true spouse in reality as well as in name. Salute the Mothers of your monastery; be at peace, and may our Lord God bless you! —Your uncle, PHILIP NERI.

From ROME, *24th April* 1575.

V.

TO THE SAME.

On the death of her father.

DEAREST NIECE,—I know well that the death of your father of blessed memory, (may God have received him to Himself in His glory!) must have caused great sorrow to his family, not only from the loss of the guidance of one so kindly and so capable, but also from his having left the burden of the house on the shoulders of a son who is still too young to rule it as is befitting. For one must have lived long and gained much experience, to have the prudence and sound judgment needed to steer the bark in storm as well as in calm. Nevertheless, I trust that God will give him virtue and wisdom, to make up for what is lacking in years. And then I know that he has had a good education, and I feel sure good Messer Barnaba has left his affairs in seemly order and easy to understand; so that if he goes on in the way thus marked out for him I do not doubt that the family will persevere in well-doing, and in the fear of God, and in the same good order as while your father was alive. For these reasons I have felt great sorrow at your bereavement, and have not failed to

pray to God, and to get others to pray, for the repose of his blessed soul. Nor will I ever forget you, his children and my nephews and nieces, in the holy Sacrifice and in my prayers, that you may be aided in spirit by His divine goodness and prudence, to the salvation of your souls ; and that you may be, as regards the body, protected in all your temporal affairs, so far forth as may seem to the Lord expedient for what we should most hope for and love, the glory of God by means of a good life. I need not offer you my services, because the ties of relationship bind me to your aid, and, moreover, because by the grace of God I am poor and old and infirm, and so can aid you very little in worldly matters. But, such as I am, I will always gladly do anything in my power for you in all your need ; loving you as I do with all christian sincerity, and being to you, both in age and in relationship, as a father. You who live securely in a convent are not exposed to all these changes and chances of the world. And although I know that you do in your charity and with due moderation sympathize with your brothers and sisters, yet, as you tell me in your letter, you take all things from the hand of God, conforming yourself and resigning yourself in everything to His divine good pleasure. And this is in truth a way in which we cannot go wrong, and the one only way which brings us to taste of and enjoy that peace which sensual and earthly men know not of. Thank the Lord for the grand and secure state to which He has called you ; if indeed you know, as I trust you do, the worth of a vocation so high. In regard of the desire you express to make your confession to me if you were ever within reach of me, believe me, my dearest niece, you have the stay and support of very good religious ; and if you are only sincere, and open your heart in all sincerity to your confessor, God will never fail to do for you all that is necessary for your spiritual profit. God never fails in what is necessary, and he is never prodigal of what is superfluous ; and since you are in a place where you must of necessity be in the hands of one man alone, if you will only pray and have a real honest wish to be good, God will put Himself into the mouth of your confessor, be he never so unskilled, so that you may not lose the fruit of your faith and the preparation of your heart. Recommend yourself fervently to God before you go to confession or to ask counsel of him who is set over you ; clothe him in your heart with the person of Jesus Christ our Lord, and feel that God Himself is speaking to you ; be ever ready to obey him and to believe him rather than yourself or your companions, who have, it may be, but little spirituality. And thus you will prove how true are the words of the Holy Ghost, who says of our superiors and pastors : He who hears and obeys his superiors hears and obeys Me, and he who despises them despises and disobeys Me. I know that you have been brought up in so good a school that all these things are familiar to you ;

but, seeing your faith, and wishing to confirm you more and more in what is good, I could not refrain from saying these few words, needless as I feel them to be. Sister Dionisia's long illness calls for great compassion and sympathy, and that longing of hers to get well, if only it bears the impress of these conditions —if it so please God, and if it be expedient for the salvation of my soul—may be put up with, because we can do a great many things in health which we cannot do in sickness. I believe indeed that the safest thing would be—what God wills, and to ask Him for patience in her sickness; for very often, if we recover, we not only do not do the good we proposed to do when we were ill, but we multiply our sins and ingratitude, and become tender of our bodies, and sensual. Nevertheless we will pray for her, but always with reserve of the above conditions. I commend myself to the fervour and devotion of your novices, and to the prayers of all your venerable Mothers. I will not fail to make up the number of the rosaries, that you may be able to give one to each of the nuns; but they must pray while they say them for my intention, that I may be enabled to do what is pleasing to the Lord. God bless you, and your brothers and sisters too, to whom I wish this letter to be read; and I commend myself to them.—Your loving uncle,

PHILIP NERI.

ROME, *8th December* 1575.

P.S.—The rosaries shall be sent by the first opportunity.

VI.

TO SISTER ANNA MARIA TREGUI, A NUN IN S. LUCIA, FLORENCE.

He exhorts her, amongst other things, to perseverance in the service of God.

DEAREST NIECE,—I have written to the Mother Prioress all I had to say on the matter she commissioned you to write to me about, and so I have nothing else to say to you, except that, though I have been rather unwell, yet by the grace of God I am now in excellent health; and indeed my indisposition was so slight that it kept me only a week in bed. I was delighted to hear of your advance in the service of God, for having tasted how sweet His yoke is, you not only bear it gladly, but are, moreover, anxious that the person who is dearest to you, your sister I mean, should

also take it on herself; and as you are her sister in the flesh you long to be her sister in the spirit also, that you may live together in the service of Him who is able to give you all good and full content. The which desire of yours God will grant, if you ask it of Him with fervent and persevering prayer; nor will I fail on my part to do the like, for she could not make a better resolution than to live and die with you; it would be an exceeding grace to her as it has been to you. Show yourself grateful for it by growing day by day in spirituality and fervour, and humble yourself in your own eyes and before the nuns, so that you may become great in the sight of God. Commend me to Sister Dionisia, to the Mother Prioress, and the other sisters, for all of whom I will not cease to pray, as I wish them to pray for me; and this I expect more especially of you, praying God to bless you and keep you in His grace.—Yours, PHILIP NERI.

ROME, *17th October* 1576.

VII.

To S. CHARLES BORROMEO, MILAN.

MOST ILLUSTRIOUS AND REVEREND MONSIGNOR,—I have received the document you sent me by the abbate Agostini, relating to the affairs of S. Simone. Our F. Giovanni Paolo will be able to tell your most illustrious Lordship what we have decided with him; and if this be confirmed by the deputies there, you will learn that we would gladly come to labour in the service of God at Milan, and wherever else it may please His divine Majesty to call us; although it did not appear to us prudent to take so great a step all at once until our affairs here in Rome are settled and established. And further, as I have not as yet had any opportunity of serving your most illustrious Lordship, let me now assure you that I am both now and always most ready to do so; and that I shall strive to have my part by my prayers in the good which the Lord God is doing in your city by your hand, beseeching Him to further it to His honour and glory. I humbly kiss your hand, and beg your blessing for myself, and for this our little congregation.—Your most humble PHILIP NERI.

From ROME, *13th May* 1578.

VIII.

To Donna Felice Orsina Colonna, wife of the Viceroy of Sicily, at Naples.

He regrets that he was unable to grant a request made to him.

Most illustrious and excellent lady, my most honoured mistress,—I need not now assure you of what you already know so well, that I eagerly desire to content your most excellent Ladyship in everything you deign to ask of me; you can therefore understand the regret I feel that I cannot comply with the request you urge so warmly in your letter, that I would send Messer Giovan Francesco to Naples; for while I would most gladly send him if he were in a state to undertake so long a journey, and to be of any use when he had arrived in Naples, he is so unwell that he cannot leave Rome, and would be to you rather a trouble and a burden than a consolation. Still, I grieve much that I cannot send him. I am quite sure that your Excellency will take this in good part, and believe that if I do not in this matter what our many obligations to your Ladyship would urge on me to do, it is because I cannot, for my will is ever ready to serve you in anything you may command. And so, praying God to bestow on you all happiness, I humbly kiss your hand, and those of all your most illustrious family.—Your servant in Christ,

Philip Neri.

Rome, *8th May* 1579.

IX.

To Monsignor Domenico Pinelli, Bishop of Fermo.

Most reverend Monsignor, my most respected lord in Christ,—The Lord God knows that it is not only my own desire, but that of all the congregation, that this our institute of the Oratory should spread far and wide, by reason of the abundant fruit we see of it; and we would gladly devote ourselves to this work were it clear to us that this was our proper vocation. But hitherto, taking prudent measure of our strength, it has seemed to me well to hesitate in undertaking new Oratories outside Rome, although I have been urged to do so by the most illustrious and most reverend Lords S. Prassede[1] and Paleotto in regard of their cities of Milan and Bologna. We have always humbly

[1] S. Charles Borromeo, Cardinal of S. Prassede.

declined to accede to their requests, even as we are now compelled, and for the same reasons, to decline that which your most reverend Lordship and your city of Fermo so cordially make to us. I grieve much that we cannot make a better return for the confidence and devotion which both you and they express towards this congregation. But as we greatly long to satisfy somewhat your eager desire, we have thought that your most reverend Lordship might send to Rome two of the priests who wish to join the Oratory, and whom you judge to be best fitted for its exercises; and thus, by living with us and having experience of our mode of life, they may with the blessing of God learn how best to devote themselves to this great work. We will give them all possible insight and instruction as to our rules, and I promise to take as much care of them as of these my other children. And if it were a consolation to your most reverend Lordship, and to your city, that one of our fathers should come to you to begin the new Congregation, I will do my utmost to gratify you, and will watch over its progress and growth with the greatest care I can. Deign to look on us as your devoted servants in all things; and may the Lord God have you in His holy keeping! Of your most reverend Lordship, the humble servant,

PHILIP NERI.

ROME, *the 13th January* 1580.

X.

TO MADONNA FIORA RAGNI, NAPLES.

He consoles her in her affliction.

HONOURED SISTER IN CHRIST,—I have received the little phial of the manna of S. Andrea which you have sent me; it is dear to me as a thing of devotion, and I thank you for it. In your illness strive to conform yourself to the will of the Lord, who has sent it to you; for although it will inflict some anguish on your body, and on your soul some mortification, in that you cannot enjoy the devotions and spiritual exercises you were wont to have when you were well, nevertheless, if you strive to be patient under it, and to resign yourself to the will of God, you will gain so much good for your soul that you will not be sorry to have suffered so little to gain so great a reward. May our Lord God give you grace to do so. Pray to Him for me, as I will for you. And let us live so that, as we cannot see each other again in this life, we may see each other for ever in the life to come, with the fulness of content which the saints in Paradise are now enjoying. —Your brother in Christ, PHILIP NERI.

ROME, *15th April* 1580.

XI.

To S. Charles Borromeo, Milan.

He removes from his mind an erroneous impression.

Most illustrious and most reverend Monsignor, my most honoured Lord,—Our Lord the Pope sent me yesterday a post-script written by your most illustrious and reverend Lordship, from which it appears that you are anything but satisfied with our Congregation, under the supposition that two of our priests had first given a promise to go into the service of the Duke of Bavaria and then revoked it, a change which amounted to an act of disobedience to his Holiness. I have therefore thought it well, with that same christian frankness which you yourself are wont to use in all your proceedings, to clear up this matter to you, for no other purpose than that you may know the exact truth. You must know, then, that the two priests who are reported to have acted thus are not members of our Congregation, but chaplains of the Confraternity of Charity at S. Girolamo, with which we are not in any wise connected, as Monsignor Speciano can assure you. Moreover, your most illustrious and reverend Lordship may be certain that there has not been in this matter any question of obedience to the Pope; and I affirm this positively, because I myself in person treated this matter with his Holiness, whom I am thus compelled to invoke as a witness. Wherefore I entreat your most illustrious and reverend Lordship not to believe us capable of such contumacy as to refuse obedience to our Lord the Pope. Were it otherwise, we should deem ourselves to have fallen into most grievous error and sin, from which we trust and pray that our Lord will ever deliver us by His holy grace. And we further entreat you that you would deign to favour us with your prayers, and that if any rumour should reach you of anything either in me or in any of our fathers which deserves correction, you will yourself perform this act of charity towards us, and we shall accept it as a most special favour. And, together with all our fathers, I humbly kiss your hands.—Your most illustrious and most reverend Lordship's most devoted servant,

Philip Neri.

Rome, 15*th June* 1581.

XII.

To Sister Anna Maria Tregui, a Nun in S. Lucia, Florence.

He gives her many suggestions in regard of the spiritual life, and especially on detachment, mortification, and charity.

Sister Anna, my dearest daughter in Christ,—Your letter has made me marvel much that, in the fifteen years you have worn the holy habit of religion, you have not yet got rid of yourself, a thing you ought to have attained to when first you put it on. For in leaving your home, your relations and friends, and shutting yourself up as one dead to the world in a sepulchre enclosed within four walls; in changing your name, in giving up your own will, your own opinions and wisdom; in resigning yourself into the hands of God and for God's sake into the hands of the prelate and the mother Prioress, you ought certainly to be already dead and buried to all creatures and to yourself. And yet this step, the first we propose to take, is the last we take in practice and in reality, so closely does this skin of self-love cleave to our hearts, and so keen the smart and anguish of flaying it off, the keener and more agonizing the nearer we get to the quick. We read in Job: *skin for skin, and all that a man hath he shall give for his soul*, which words we may thus expound to suit our purpose. All skins, that is to say all outward things—for of all the substance of our body the skin is the outermost and most visible, and like a thin veil hides our flesh and our bones—all the things of this world, I say, are to be given up for the spiritual life. The word *anima* or soul in this verse means our bodily life; but let us apply it to that life of virtue we live in the mortification of our vices and sins, of evil thoughts and evil affections, and in the constant acquisition of holy virtues. Now consider, my daughter, how many unsightly skins the soul has, and that all of them have to be stripped away, down to the very quick, with the knife of holy discipline. The mole is a blind animal which abides always in the earth; it eats earth, it burrows in the earth, and never has earth enough. And such is the avaricious man or woman; women are by nature avaricious. And what a revolting thing avarice is! A man has received so much from God; He has given him not his being only, and all created things from the angels downwards, but His own beloved Son. The sweet Christ, the incarnate Word, gave Himself, for all things needful to us, even to the hard and shameful death of the cross, and then gave Himself to us in a Sacrament, even as at first He left heaven,

humbling Himself to become man for us ; and on the cross He was stripped of all His garments, and poured out His precious Blood, and His Soul was parted from His Body ; and all things created are open-handed and liberal, and show forth the goodness of their Creator ; the sun pours abroad light, and fire gives out heat ; every tree stretches forth its arms and reaches to us its fruit ; the water and the air and all nature declare the bounty of the Creator. And we, who yet are His living images, we do not represent Him, but with base degeneracy deny Him in our works, however loudly we confess Him with our mouths. Now, if avarice is a monstrous thing in man, what is it in a religious who has made a vow of poverty, and stripped himself of everything for the love of God ! We must, at whatever cost of pain, get rid of this foul pestilence of avarice ; nor shall we feel the pain if we seriously reflect that when we have laid aside this sordid covering of our souls we shall be clothed with a royal and an imperial garment. I mean not only that we must despise gold and silver and pleasure, and all else that is so prized by a blind and deluded world, but that we are to give even the very life we love so much for the honour of God and the salvation of our neighbour, having our hearts ever ready to make this sacrifice in the strength of divine grace ; and in this spirit we are to go on overcoming ourselves in our words, humbling ourselves both in heart and in body beneath all, and regarding ourselves as vile, vile as the rag which wipes the muddy wooden shoes of the sisters, or as a dirty kitchen cloth, and desiring to be held and reputed as such. Now this is what I should wish to see you come to—you who are ready to give up yourself, whether for life or death, who are seeking after virtue with your whole heart and asking it of God in unceasing prayer, and mortifying yourself all the live-long day, and striving to serve all around you in humility and submission both of body and soul—that you should nevertheless come into such disfavour with all the sisters, and even with your confessor, that you should be looked upon as the most useless, careless, lukewarm, and worthless sister in the convent. I do not mean only that the nuns and your superiors should seem to repute you and to treat you thus by way of discipline and mortification, but I mean that God should permit you to be so looked upon in very deed and truth, and that you should be driven from the society of the other nuns like a tainted sheep, cut off from the rest and all forlorn, and even thrust into prison, as befell your father S. Peter Martyr, who was held for an infamous person and driven away and banished, pure and holy and modest youth as he was, because he had been visited in his room by the most holy Madonna, and yet God permitted that he should be otherwise reputed and deemed to be infamous ; and as also befell the holy mother Blessed Catherine of Siena, who was calumniated by the sick woman she was nursing, so that the calumny spread all through the convent,

and it was God's will to lead her by this rugged stony path, that she might be truly mortified and seen to be detached, as indeed she was, from her own honour and her reputation with the world, and that she was content with the eye of the Spouse she was serving, and the witness of a good conscience; although in her prayers she told her anguish to the Lord, and was by Him reproved with those two crowns her sweet Spouse showed her, one of thorns and the other of gold, as you read in the legend of her Life.

What I say of the skin of avarice, I say of all the other skins with which the heart is covered, one upon another, for it has more skins of vices and evil habits and ways than a cat has hairs, for I should say too little were I to say than an onion has coats. And do you know how those coats dry up and harden? Just as a skin dries up if you hang it on the house-top, or in the draught of the window, when the north or north-east wind is blowing in winter. Now, judge from this whether to get rid of one's self, it is enough to do it with a passing thought which flits through our minds once a year, perhaps, or whether we need fire and knife, and to be every moment clipping with shears, and cutting away with a razor those filmy threads which sprout from our flesh; for if we do not stand heedfully at the mirror of mental prayer, watching them as they spring up, but put up with them and let them alone; if without examination of conscience we go heedlessly on, they grow in length and thickness, and become sturdy trees, with roots and fangs so deeply fixed that they can no more be plucked out, but we have to hew them down, and dig all round them, and remove the earth, till we have got to the very bottom, where they have taken such fast and complicated hold; whereas, if they had been rooted up when first they appeared, you might have plucked them out with two fingers. I do not wish to make you afraid or disheartened at thought of such an undertaking; but I wish to set it all before you, to give you due notice that of yourself alone you will do nothing, because to conquer yourself demands a strength greater than any you can put forth. It needs the might of God's grace, and the prayers of your spiritual father, and the mother Prioress, and those of all the other sisters; and that you, from your heart, commend yourself at chapter to the prayers of all, and most humbly, at confession, to your confessor, that he may pray for you, and offer you up in prayer to God. And, then, you must greatly love holy obedience, and put it before and above every other thing; and never take anything to your own use unless it has been signed and sealed with the blessing of your superior. Together with obedience love prayer; but carefully remember that, while you love and desire prayer and holy communion with the utmost affection of your heart, you must be always ready to leave either or both at the call of obedience. Regard holy obedience as a

true prayer and a most real communion; you must not desire prayer and communion for the sake of the sweetness of devotion you find in them—that would be seeking yourself and not God—but that you may become humble and obedient, gentle and patient. When you find these graces in you, then you will gather the fruit of prayer and communion, and, above all, you will live in peace with all. If the devil finds in a convent union and peace, he dreads this unruffled calm more than all other exercises of the spiritual life, without that bond of charity which should always hold closely together the sisters in a good community. And this I will show you with an example. If there were a great host of many armed men drawn out to do battle with another valiant host; and if that first army were divided amongst themselves, so that one soldier fought with another of the same host, do you not see how easily they would be overcome by their common enemy, while one was fighting with another, and neither obeying captain, or colonel, or general? But if they were at peace with one another, and military discipline were kept, and all together fought as one man against the common foe, do you not at once see how much stronger they would be thus, what terror they would strike into their opponents, and how much nearer they would be to victory? And thus our adversary the devil, who is unceasingly making war on us to get possession of our souls, is always seeking to divide us, to stir up strifes and contentions, envyings and factions, amongst us; because he knows that while we are wrangling with one another, he can step quietly in and conquer us, and lead us away captive, or slay us, or rout us in disorder. Union and peace together make up the weapon of finest temper, and most dreaded by our foe; for God establishes His reign with the united and the peaceful, and when He goes forth before us to the battle, who then can be overcome? Take delight in the life of holy community, shun all singularity, take great heed of purity of heart; for the Holy Spirit dwells in pure and simple souls, and He is the great Master of prayer, and makes us to dwell in that abiding peace and gladness of heart which are as a foretaste of Paradise; while anger, discord, and bitterness, abiding in the soul, are as a fume from hell. God give you grace that you may so gather yourself up into His divine love, and enter so deeply through the wound of the side into the living Fount of the God made man, that you may deny yourself and all love of self, and never more find way to come out thence. And there, within that wound, remember me, and pray for me, a wretched worthless sinner.—Your father in Christ,

PHILIP NERI.

ROME, 30*th August* 1585.

XIII.

To S. Charles Borromeo, Milan.

He recommends to him a priest to be employed in his service.

Most illustrious and reverend Monsignor, my most honoured Lord,—I do not cease to honour your most illustrious Lordship with all my heart, and to pray to God for you in my languid prayers, as I am every way bound to do; and having reflected that Messer Paolo Emilio San Marco, doctor and priest of Rossano, a worthy man, of good life, of great gifts, and who has served in several cures as vicar, would be a suitable man for you, I have thought of getting him into the service of your most illustrious Lordship. He desires it eagerly, in order that you may deign to employ him in anything you wish for the service of God; and he will come to you most gladly, resolved to serve and obey your most illustrious Lordship with all his heart and strength. Wherefore I entreat you, if you have a suitable place for him, to be pleased to accept him as one of your servants; and I will not use more words in recommending him, for I know that if he comes he will recommend himself by his faithful service, and his pious and religious bearing and demeanour. I beseech the Lord God to bless your most illustrious person with all manner of prosperity, and to increase within you all the grace you yourself most desire; and I most humbly kiss your hands.—Your most illustrious and reverend Lordship's servant in the Lord, Philip Neri.

Rome, *5th November* 1583.

XIV.

To Sister Maria Vittoria Tregui, Nun in S. Pietro-Martire, Florence.

He shows her how great a grace of God her vocation is, and makes many useful suggestions to her.

I have just been thinking of your name, and of the day on which I received your letter, which was the very day on which, in 1571, was gained, by the grace of God, that famous victory over the Turkish fleet. You are called Maria, and the gathering together of the waters, those vast reservoirs whence come the rivers, and into which they return, are called in Holy Scripture and in the Latin tongue *maria*, which is a little shorter to say than Maria. Maria is that ineffable Virgin, that glorious Lady,

who conceived in her womb, and brought forth, without prejudice of her virginity, Him whom the broad expanse of heaven cannot contain, Christ, Son of God and of Mary. This holy Mother of God is called the Star of the Sea; wherefore I conclude that not without deep meaning was this name given to you, because in coming forth from the world, you were by the grace of God drawn out of the waters of that sea in crossing over which so many hapless souls perish—the greater part sunk deep in the waters, and so few comparatively escape. But you, like another Peter, have been taken by the hand and upheld, so that you have not so much walked through the waters as upon them. Those holy fathers of the Old Testament walked through the midst of the waters and were not drowned. You know how the Red Sea was parted before them, and the river Jordan, so that by the grace of God, the people passed through the waters unharmed. But the Christian Church walks upon the waves of the sea, and does not even wet her feet, if she abide steadfast in the faith, following in the footsteps of her rightful Spouse and Guide. The walking of those patriarchs of old time through the midst of the waters, means that, possessing riches, and having wives and children, they lived without soiling their affections with any of these things; for they took of them only the use, and were ready to leave them at the bidding of God, in whatever way it might please His divine Majesty to require them at their hands. Thus did Abraham, who came forth from his house, left his substance, his friends, and relations, and went out at the word of God a pilgrim ever thereafter on the earth. Job had a wife and sons and daughters, and much substance, but he dispensed them as a good steward of the providence of God, and he brought up his children virtuously, looking on them rather as God's children than his own; and life, and health, and all he had he held as a loan from God, and saw in his prudence that these things do not abide with us for ever, but that we either give them up before we die, or that anyhow at death we return naked to the earth as we were born. Wherefore, when God permitted the devil to tempt him, Job was not in the least disturbed in mind, because he had foreseen everything and long looked for that day, armed with faith and patience; and he said: If we have awhile enjoyed these good things with which God has provided us, why shall we not willingly receive from the same Hand poverty and tribulation, which are only a test of our fidelity and virtue, that we may be enriched hereafter with far truer and abiding riches in heaven? David too, king as he was, declared that he was poor and needy; but holy Peter and the other apostles, and apostolic men after them, and all the primitive Church in Jerusalem, when they saw the Son of God born in poverty, and living with nothing of His own, so that He had not even where to lay His head, and beheld Him dead and naked on a cross, they too stripped themselves of everything,

desiring only what might clothe them decently and sustain them poorly in extreme necessity ; and they chose the way of the counsels, as do in this day all true religious, who keep ever living within them the image and exemplar of that most wondrous foundation of christian perfection ; relinquishing not only the possession of property and all that they might with a good conscience keep, but also their own opinions, and notions, and will, in order that they may have perfect victory over themselves, and that the kingdom of Christ may come to bear rule in their souls with His grace and His love, so that the devil may be banished thence, and never more have sway therein by means of sin. Now, my daughter, you have with your little bark almost reached the shore of the land of promise, that blessed country promised to the elect of God, in which good religious will have a place so high that they will be with the Thrones in the choir of the lofty hierarchy ; for these most blissful spirits are called the seat and throne of God ; and Christ said to Peter, who asked Him what reward they should have, seeing that they had left all and followed Him, that they should sit on their twelve thrones with Him in that day when He should judge the world. Inasmuch, then, as the religious has left all and followed Christ, and in that He has said that every one who forsakes all he has and follows Him shall be taken up to that throne, it follows clearly, in regard of those good religious who shall have been mindful of their vows and their rule, that, at that grand scene when the world shall be burned up and the trumpets of the angels shall sound, when Lucifer, with all his crew of demons and the lost amongst men, shall fall headlong into hell, they shall stand secure and high above all this ruin and woe, clothed with glory and triumphant, under the sheltering wings of Jesus Christ ; while carnal and worldly men will say in confusion : Behold those whom we despised and laughed at, whom we looked upon as sour and melancholy men, and of weak mind ; behold, now are they among the angels on high seats and thrones of glory, and we fools and bereft of reason are everlastingly in the ever-burning fire of the deep of hell. And, O my daughter in Christ, since you are so near a felicity so great, turn not back, nor strike your oar into the earth ; draw not off from the shore, nor look back in thought or affection to the world ; for the world is a thicket in which all who wander are waylaid and slain ; or a forest full of ruthless monsters ; or a plain full of soldiers, full of robbery, and violence, and wrong, always excepting the good, of whom there are still some few. Rather look on this world as a house that has been burned, from which you have just managed to escape, blackened with the smoke and scorched with the flames, so that you care not to go near it more because it either defiles or burns ; but withdrawing from all occasions of sin lest you perish, and clinging fast to all good exercises, loving your cell, and choir, and prayer,

and loving above all obedience and holy poverty, seek to gain the victory. Now you have come forth from the sea, that is, from out the world, all restless and storm-tossed as it is, and from all love of the things you have left behind in the world, of father and mother, brothers and sisters, friends and relations, houses and vineyards, and all besides. And lest this should seem to be spoken against christian piety, you have the authority of Holy Scripture, which says the very same thing, I mean the Holy Ghost in the psalm: Listen, O daughter, and from the words receive light and effulgence of grace, and in that light look around you. When you see the fair and peaceful land that is pointed out to you, forget that other land full of toil and weariness, which brings forth only thorns and briars; have no memory more of your country or your father's house, but incline the ear of obedience to My words, and stoop your shoulders to the cross of true mortification, exterior and interior both, of all evil ways and thoughts and all deluding loves. Put in Me thy trust, thy hope, and all thy love; so will I take thee for My bride and find delight in thy modesty and humility. I will give thee from My table every manner of food I am wont to give to those who love and serve Me faithfully; such are the temptations I permit, and tribulations which at first will seem to thee bitter, but after, when thou growest used to them, will be sweet to thy taste. And thou wilt learn and know that this way, the way I take with those I love, is the true espousal of thy soul to Me. And thus, since I have taken thee for my spouse, when tribulation shall touch thee thou shalt say with holy Agnes: "My Lord Jesus Christ hath pledged Himself to me with this ring," and so enduring with patience and with gladness, you will worthily bear the name of Maria Vittoria. But let it not content you, daughter, to have come up out of the sea, unless not your body alone, but your soul likewise, has abandoned every worldly hope and affection, for those Hebrews, who went up through the desert after their leader Moses, though the Red Sea lay between Egypt and them, still pined in longing for the flesh they used to eat to the full, and, in their thoughts and their affections, were still on the further side of the sea in the thick darkness of Egypt—which figures to us our ignorance of our happy lot, and our forgetfulness of the blessings we have received and are ever receiving, and those still greater which the mercy of God has prepared for us in the blessed life. If we think not of this, our love is not nourished, but languishes and grows cold; nor do we learn to give God here on earth that service of praise which will be our unresting employment there in heaven. For think not it will be weariness to say for evermore with angels and all the other blessed: *Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus;* but, from the superabundance of so great good we enjoy, which God has from eternity prepared for us that we may enjoy it for ever and ever, having the vision and the possession, together with the

fruition of Him ; and since we cannot satiate ourselves with that satiety, for that the longing and the hunger ever grow in the measure of the abundance and the plenteousness given to us, both heart and mouth and voice, yea, our bones, and all that is within us, are constrained to cry out: Blessed art Thou and holy, for ever and ever. Amen. And in your prayers you must not forget those who, neither in bark nor by bridge, are crossing this dangerous sea, but are struggling to ford it all alone ; and you must commend them to the mighty and compassionate Hand which has succoured you, and have for them the most tender sympathy, and put them in your inmost heart. So of the pelican, amongst other things, it is said that, when it wants to feed, it stands on the sea-shore and swallows some of those shells that pilgrims wear in their hats, which are close shut up like hard stones, and within them is the oyster and the *tellina*, and in the warmth of its stomach the shell relaxes its rigidity and opens, and then the pelican disgorges the shells and feeds on the flesh they enclosed. Even so, see that you put those hardened and obstinate sinners in your heart, and cry to God in charity, and get permission to take the discipline for them. So God will send them compunction, and their hearts will open to the light of grace ; and you will take such liking to this exercise, and will glow with such zeal for the conversion of souls, that you will altogether dissolve in tears of sweetness as you think of the joy there is in heaven and amongst the holy angels at the conversion of a sinner. You will, moreover, grow in charity and in merit, and those souls converted by your prayers will be your glory and your crown ; not that you have been the principal cause of their conversion, but that God will give you the fruit of it while He reserves to Himself the honour, seeing that He alone has been the author of their conversion. May you keep in good health and in the grace of God.—Yours, PHILIP NERI.

ROME, 11*th October* 1585.

XV.

TO THE BISHOP OF SAN SEVERINO.

He thanks him for his kindness to the Congregation of that city.

MOST ILLUSTRIOUS AND REVEREND MONSIGNOR, MY MOST RESPECTED LORD,—It was a very great joy to me and to our fathers to receive your most reverend Lordship's letter of the 7th September, which was to have been delivered to me by the Reverend Don Bartolommeo Achillei ; but since one of our fathers has passed through San Severino on his return from Loreto, he has visited the shrine of the Madonna de' Lumi, and seen everything with his own eyes. And although it was not necessary

that you should send your letter by another hand when Don Bartolommeo had left, it is a joy to us to receive from you a confirmation of the report made us by the said father, that all is going on well at the shrine of the most holy Madonna. And inasmuch as we of our congregation have no other wish or desire than to gain souls for Christ, we have the greater hope that it will succeed with you, by reason of the warm and cordial affection you show both to the shrine itself and to our congregation attached to it, which is most affectionately devoted to your most illustrious and reverend Lordship, and prays for the increase of your happiness and holiness. We all most humbly kiss your hands.—Your most illustrious and reverend Lordship's servant in the Lord,

PHILIP NERI.

ROME, 30*th September* 1589.

XVI.

TO TIBERIO . . . (A FRAGMENT).

He dissuades him from leaving the Congregation.

It was my wish that Germanico should have gone away much later, and also that you should have stayed for a short time only in that home of yours, amidst the attractions of flesh and blood, of mother and brothers, not wavering and undecided, but having before you the example of S. Marco and S. Marcelliano, who, after bravely enduring many torments, were so moved at length by father, mother, and children, that they were near denying Christ, if S. Sebastian had not strengthened them with his holy words. You allege the great expense, but I cannot see that either in Bologna, or wherever else you study, you will avoid spending much more. As to your health, I do not see how you will be able to stand the study of law, for when you began to apply yourself to study grammar you . . . so that in my poor judgment you will do wonders, especially in a study so full of toil. Your wish to help in family affairs is a wish to go back to the world and to forsake Christ, with whom, if you had gone on a little while, you would have said: *O how good and how sweet the Lord is! Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity.* And after all what great good can you . . . allowing that your brothers are well disposed, especially when you see them spending the money while you are toiling to get it. *Verum, dimissis omnibus*, if you lose your spirituality you will be obliged to affect to be liberal, but you will be extremely covetous and a great cause . . . amongst relations and in regard of property, that you will be more and more thoroughly carnal. . . . the same melancholy to such a pitch that God grant it come not to pass that your mother will grieve most

bitterly for having taken you from the path of God. You well know, my Tiberio, the trouble you had in getting admitted into the house, and how at last, for the sake of your soul, because of your persistence and the good disposition you showed in everything, and on other accounts, such as your scholarship and your great wealth, we were . . . Well, now it lies with you to stay where you are or to come back, for we don't want people here by force ; I will say only that Paolo Camillo ought to make you feel ashamed, *et hæc sufficient*. To sum up all in one word, without Christ you will never have any good that is truly good.

XVII.

To Monsignor Michele Mercati, S. Miniato al Tedesco.

He congratulates him on the improvement of his health.

Very illustrious and reverend, and my most honoured Lord,—The letter of your most illustrious and at the same time most reverend Lordship gave me great joy in many ways. First, it has given me very great pleasure to learn that you have arrived safely, and that your journey, instead of doing you harm, has much improved your health ; for that is one of the greatest pleasures and most earnest wishes of my heart at this time. And then it is another great joy to see that you are gaining health and strength daily. For this I thank God, and I hope that the purity of the air, and the satisfaction you feel in being with good and congenial friends, will very soon restore you to your wonted state of health. I am also delighted with your lovely Rocca, its fair gardens and its fruit trees, and its woods and thickets too, because you find delight in them, and I enjoy their charm through you and with you. You enjoy them in actual presence, and I enjoy them by sympathy with you in your joy, and so I have my full part in the pleasure and content you feel. It was a further consolation to my heart to hear that your sisters, who are spouses of Jesus Christ, have not forgotten me ; and this in great part for the sake of your father of blessed memory, who while he lived was wont to feel so kindly towards me and speak of me so kindly, because of the native goodness of his heart which made him think well and speak still better of all with whom he had to do. I always admired this in him, and now I feel sure he is receiving the reward of it in heaven ; and his daughters have inherited his goodness, and walk in his footsteps. I greet them with holy and cordial affection, rejoicing that in them the grace of God perfects His natural gifts and leads them on to perfection in the spiritual life. As to that great personage whom they wished to see raised to the highest place, their wish may be excused by reason of their

good and simple intention ; but it seems to me better to pray in general terms for him, that God would grant him whatever may seem best to His divine Providence. And thus, being entirely yours, I implore for you all holy consolation.—Your most illustrious and reverend Lordship's very affectionate servant in Christ,

PHILIP NERI.

ROME, *3rd May* 1591.

XVIII.

TO THE VENERABLE GIOVENALE ANCINA, NAPLES.

He thanks him for remembering him in the Holy Mass, and treats of several affairs.

REVEREND FATHER, MY HONOURED AND VERY DEAR BROTHER IN THE LORD,—It gives me singular pleasure that you remember me in the holy unbloody Sacrifice, which is a mighty means of inclining the most omnipotent Father to grant us His grace and mercy, whereof we have the greatest need by reason of the worthlessness of our doings if they rest not on this foundation. Wherefore if you continue this good and holy work, the gladness I feel at receiving such help will increase in like manner, and I now thank you beforehand ; and as the ship which has abundant depth of water ploughs its way more securely on, so I trust that being aided by the sacrifices and prayers of many I shall more happily and easily reach the haven of eternal life, when it pleases the Lord to call me. I am glad, too, that you continue to assign to chosen persons, such as Cardinal Albano, Messer Adriano, and Messer Nicolò Leopardi, the celebration of the most holy Mass, and I approve your charity, which is more pleasing to the Lord, the more widely it is extended and diffused. It seems to me, however, advisable to pray the Lord to grant a good confessor to the Monastery of Santa Marta, in order that the great toils of Messer Adriano may receive increase from the virtue of his successor in that office, for in this consists the great honour of God, that there be persons who love Him in truth. What you write to me about Lucilla has been read to Messer Giovan Matteo, who is in great doubt what to do about it. He will be told to write to Naples, and hurry on the affair that it may be done with, especially as many difficulties may arise from day to day. My opinion is that it should be settled according to your wish. I greet all the fathers and brothers with you, and pray the Lord to keep them all in His holy grace.—Wholly yours in the Lord,

PHILIP NERI.

From ROME, 10*th May* 1591.

XIX.

To the Venerable Alessandro Luzzago, at Brescia.

He promises to commend him to the Lord, according to his request.

My very illustrious and honoured Lord,—The lowly opinion of yourself which has led your very illustrious Lordship to write me a letter so confidential as the one I have received from you binds me to answer you by deeds rather than by letters or words; but inasmuch as I have not corresponded to the calls and graces of our Lord God as freely and with as much fruit as I ought, I feel myself so very far below the good opinion and conceit you have of me, that I am unable to content you in what you ask of me, with much humility, for yourself and for others. Nevertheless, since it is a matter we have to treat with One of so great perfection that He cannot only make up for our imperfections, but also in a moment make an imperfect creature perfect in a high degree, for this is the nature of our God, I accept the charge you lay on me; and I will do my best, as indeed I have done ever since I came to know you in Rome, to remember you and your spiritual needs, the which, by reason of the abundant light of God's goodness and purity granted you, you discern in yourself; and also those souls you commend to me with such charity and affection. And in this I shall entreat our Lord God to look rather at the exceeding humility and faith with which they are commended to me than at the person to whom they are commended; and begging for you from our Lord the increase of His graces, with much affection I place myself always at your Lordship's disposal.—Your very illustrious Lordship's servant in the Lord, Philip Neri.

Rome, *26th October* 1591.

XX.

To the Bishop of San Severino.

He expresses his gratitude for the engagement taken by the Bishop to provide for the support of the Congregation in that city.

Most illustrious and reverend Monsignor, my most honoured Lord in Christ,—The good news your most reverend Lordship has been pleased to send me filled me with so great content that I know not how to express it in words; and inasmuch as you have laid me under such obligation, I shall strive, together with these my brothers and sons in the Lord, to make the sole return I can for your affection towards us, and

your tender kindness towards that house of ours, or rather of our glorious Mother and Advocate, by gratefully and earnestly entreating the Lord God to bestow His most abundant graces on you, and on those your fellow-labourers, that they may take up and bring to a happy issue, to the glory of God, the work of the Oratory in your city; and this we shall do with the greater warmth and urgency of entreaty that we are just now so short of men that we can send you no reinforcement. But let us be strong in the Lord, *Monsignor mio;* we shall receive help sufficient for our need, *si habitabimus in adjutorio Altissimi.* if we dwell in the aid of the Most High. Imploring from Him for you, now and always, every blessing and grace, I kiss your holy hands, and entreat you to remember us in like manner, and always in your prayers.—Your most illustrious and reverend Lordship's very affectionate servant in Christ,

PHILIP NERI.

ROME, 25*th March* 1593.

XXI.

TO CARDINAL FEDERIGO BORROMEO, ARONA.

He expresses his joy at his good health, and his longing to see him and his mother.

MOST ILLUSTRIOUS AND REVEREND MONSIGNOR, MY MOST HONOURED LORD,—From the letter of your most illustrious Lordship, as well as from the account given me of you by our Messer Gentile, I have taken fresh occasion to console myself during this your absence, by reason of your abiding in good health, and of the living memory and affection you retain for me; the which, moreover, causes within me the greater contentment that I find it also in the most illustrious Signora, your mother, whom I should see with great joy once more in Rome, that so I might behold and enjoy in her that rare prudence and those other Christian virtues with which our Lord God has endowed her. Your most illustrious Lordship will confer on me a singular favour if you will express to her my great reverence, and assure her that, in return for the affection she bears me, she will find me always ready to serve her in any way in which she may think me capable. Further, I greatly long to see your most illustrious Lordship again, and, although your return is delayed, I hope my longing will be satisfied before I die. Meanwhile, may God preserve you safe and sound, as all of us unceasingly pray, and may He increase upon you His graces and blessings. In conclusion, I greet you with all due reverence.—Your most illustrious and reverend Lordship's servant, PHILIP NERI.

ROME, 24*th October* 1592.

XXII.

To Sister Anna Maria Tregui, Nun in S. Lucia, Florence.

He promises to obtain an indulgence for her, and shows her how to acquire the love of God.

Honoured Niece,—I have received your letter, wherein you ask me to obtain for you a plenary indulgence for All Souls' Day, which I greatly desire to do for you; but I must know first if you have any other indulgence in your church; and if you have, whether it is plenary, or of so many years and quarantaines, and on what day it is; and in case you have no other, whether you would be content to have it for the feast of All Saints, beginning on the vigil and lasting until sunset; for perchance his Holiness will grant it more readily for the said feast than for All Souls' Day. Wherefore send me an answer, and I will try to content your wish.

To acquire the love of God, there is no truer and shorter way than to detach ourselves from the love of the things of the world, even small things and of little moment, and from all love of self, loving in ourselves rather the will and service of God than our own satisfaction and will. Pray to God for me, and greet my sister, and sister Maria Francesca; and may our Lord God bestow on you His holy blessing!—Your uncle,

Philip Neri.

Rome, *29th April* 1594.

XXIII.

To Messer Vittorio dell' Ancisa, Florence.

He promises to pray for him always, and begs him to pray for him in return.

Very reverend and honoured Brother in the Lord,—It has been matter of great pleasure to me that you were induced, by the coming hither of Signori Cambini and Salviati, to write to me, as well on account of what you tell me of your own position and of the service you are doing to our Lord and to souls in your church, as because I have thus made acquaintance with the said signori, with whom I have been greatly consoled and edified, having found in them much goodness, together with other qualities befitting christian gentlemen.

I will not cease, since such is your wish, from commending

you continually to our Lord God, praying Him to infuse into you day by day greater strength and virtue, that so you may be able to bear the burdens it has pleased Him to allow to be laid on your shoulders; and this I most earnestly desire, both for the sake of our country, towards whose spiritual advantage all your exertions tend, and for the satisfaction of the most illustrious Lord Cardinal, who has great need of servants in so vast a charge, and also for the honour of His Divine Majesty, who will, I trust, make His grace to abound upon you. And I implore you to do the same for me, who feel so much the greater need of it, that the nearer I draw towards death, the more truly I feel that I have never done any the least good. I pray you to use my services in return in any way in which I can be of use to you, and greet you with christian and loving affection in the Lord.—Your brother in the Lord, PHILIP NERI.

ROME, *7th April* 1595.

XXIV.

TO SISTER ANNA MARIA TREGUI, NUN IN S. LUCIA, FLORENCE.

He informs her that he has not succeeded in obtaining a certain favour for her.

DEAREST NIECE,—As to the favour that the F. Procurator of the Company promised for your church, I understand that his promise was conditional on the consent of the very reverend General. Having spoken to him about it, he says he cannot grant this favour, because it can, as it is, be obtained in two churches of their order in your city; and he says that is enough, for in Rome, which is much larger than Florence, it is confined to one church. He adds, moreover, that were he to grant it to your church, he would have to grant it to others who have asked for it, or would ask for it if they knew you had it, and that this would lead to grave inconvenience. As I thought his reasons prudent and just, I could not urge your request further, nor importune one who had such solid reasons for his refusal; and this is all I have been able to do in the matter. If I can in any other thing render any service to your monastery I will do so most readily, for I am grieved that I have been unable to content your wish in this matter. Salute for me all your Mothers, and commend me to their prayers; and may our Lord God increase in them and in you His holy grace.—Your uncle,

PHILIP NERI.

ROME, *5th May* 1595.

XXV.

To the Signore Spada, Naples.

He consoles them in their grief at the recall of F. Flaminio Ricci to Rome.

My most illustrious Ladies, and most highly honoured in the Lord,—The recall of F. Flaminio to Rome has not been decided hastily, nor without much consideration. It is a step which, on many accounts and for many grave needs, ought to have been taken long ago; but our care and affection for our house in Naples, and for all those who love it, have induced us to delay his recall to the present moment. Now God has given us an opportunity, by the return of F. Tommaso Galletti, who has been sent to you with this object, to decide on doing what we ought to have done long ago. I sympathize very deeply with your sorrow and regret; but I hope that God will make you full amends, inwardly by His presence and grace, and outwardly by means of the other fathers of the congregation. Knowing how greatly we are bound to you, they will not fail to put some other in the place of F. Flaminio. And I pledge myself to have constant memory of you, commending you to our Lord, and beseeching Him to comfort you, and to increase to you, day by day, His light and His love. And, in conclusion, I commend myself earnestly to your prayers.—Your servant in the Lord,

Philip Neri.

Rome, 19*th May* 1595.

Letter of S. Philip,

Preserved in the Congregation of Bologna. The signature alone is written by the saint. It is not amongst his printed letters.

To the most illustrious and reverend Monsignor, my most honoured Lord, the Bishop Coadjutor of the Church of Bologna.

Most illustrious and reverend Monsignor, my most honoured Lord,—Our respects have been already paid to your most illustrious and reverend Lordship in the name of all our Congregation, that is, if our letter has reached you; but now that I have received your letter I write to express once more my gladness of heart and my good hope that you will employ yourself, wholly and without reserve, in the holy service of the Lord; and although you have on every occasion in the past given proof of this, yet now that you are honoured with the office of Coad-

jutor of your church of Bologna, and with great increase both of dignity and authority, I hope that virtue and strength from above may be so multiplied upon you, that you may devote yourself more perfectly still to the office and weighty burden laid upon you by the Lord. I am quite sure that you will not be wanting in the diligence, the vigilance, the tender care you need, to lead His people in the way; and I well know that the Lord has bestowed on you in addition a prompt and good will. It remains that He who has begun this work and ordered it should himself give it a happy and blessed issue. And to this end I myself in particular, and all our Congregation, will not fail to remember you always in our prayers as one who is most lovingly affectionate towards us all; and we all humbly kiss your hands.—Your most illustrious and most reverend Lordship's servant in Christ, PHILIP NERI.

ROME, *27th March* 1591.

No. IV.—Vol. I. p. 467.

Messer Vittorio dell' Ancisa.

In a work by Domenico Maria Manni, of the Florence Academy, on *certain emendations of the Lives of S. Philip Neri* (Florence, 1785), we have some notices of the life of this holy priest and friend of S. Philip, and of the monastery of the *Stabilite* founded by him at the suggestion of our saint. He was born at Florence in 1537, and died in 1598. He was chaplain of the cathedral, and went to Rome for the Jubilee of 1575, together with his brother Simone. There he sought out S. Philip, who esteemed him so highly that he set him to hear confessions in his own confessional at S. Girolamo. Having obtained from the Grand Duke Ferdinand de' Medici, with the consent of the members of the association called *di S. Paolo de' convalescenti*, the ancient hospital of S. Philip and S. James, he founded in it in 1587, by the advice of S. Philip, a monastery of cloistered nuns, to whom our saint gave the name of the *Stabilite di Messer Antonio*. Among the contributors to this great work we find the name of Bastiano Tregui, a member of the family into which S. Philip's sister Caterina had married. In the church of this monastery is the following inscription :—*Sanctus Philippus Nerius auctor fuit reverendo domino Victorio Ancisa ut hoc speciale Virginum institutum stabiliret MDLXXXIX., sub titulo Charitatis, præcipue in puellarum moribus efformandis exercendæ, sub cujus virtutis basi voluit institutor ut earum tota vivendi norma consisteret, ita tamen ut nunquam ullius peccati vinculo virtute constitutionum adstringantur.*

No. V.—Vol. II. p. 465.

CONGREGATIONS OF THE ORATORY.

Roman States:—

Rome	1565
S. Severino	1586
Fermo	1586
Camerino	1591
Fano	1598
Bologna	1615
Perugia	1615
Ripa Transona	1615
Fossombrone	1621
Città di Castello	1622
Fabriano	1632
Pesano	1637
Forlì	1637
Urbino	1637
Spoleto	1640
Montecchio	1644
Cesena	1644
Jesi	1644
Matelica	1644
Montefiore	1645
Nocera	1645
Macerata	1645
Gubbio	1649
Ferrara	1654
Ancona	1654
Ascoli	1660
Osimo	1661
Recanati	1665
Faenza	1670
Cingoli	1671
Cento	1685
Sinigaglia	1690
Norcia	1693
Montealbodo	1695
Penna	1696
Pergola	1700
Montefalco	1710
Orbitello	1715
Spello	1717
Bevagna	1725
Gradoli	1730
S. Elpidio	1735
Assisi	1760

Tuscany:—

Florence	1632
Pistoia	1665
Siena	1708
Cortona	1738

Venetia:—

Brescia	1598
Padua	1624
Pirano in Istria	1645
Udine	1650
Venice	1661
Spalatro	1688
Verona	1713
Vicenza	1720
Treviso	1746

Savoy and Piedmont:—

Thonon	1599
Casale	1613
Murazano	1646
Turin	1649
Fossano	1649
Chieri	1658
Savigliano	1674
Carmagnola	1681
Demont	1693
Asti	1696
Mondovì	1714
Crescentino	1730
Villafranca	1737
Biella	1742

Duchy of Milan:—

Lodi	1640
Como	1668
Cremona	1711

Other States of Italy:—

Reggio in Lombardy	1629
Genoa	1646
Mantua	1689

Kingdom of Naples:—

Naples	1586
Aquila	1607
Agnone	?
Tursi	1652
Sulmona	1682
Guardia	1720
Monteleone	1725
Scigliano	1774

Sicily:—

Palermo	1593
Camerata	1605
Trapani	1608
Neti	1614
Corleone	1616
Patarma	1628
Messina	1632
Girgenti	1675
Castelvetrano	1685
Sciacca	1693
Mazzara	1695
Catania	1698
Castroreale	1700
Alcamo	1710
Monreale, of Greek Catholics	1725
Acireale	1756
Giarre	1762

Malta:—

Senglea	1662

Bavaria:—

Munich	1710
Auffhausen	1712

Austria:—

Vienna	1710

Tyrol:—

Trent	1710

England:—

Birmingham	1848
London	1849

France.—

Cotignac	1592
Aix-en-Provence	?
Marseilles	?
Hyères	?
Toulon	?
Grasse	?
Avignon	?
Draguignan	*recent.*

Flanders :—

Douai	1626
Apremont	1620

Hainault :—

Braine	1712
Chièvres	1713

Brabant :—

Montaigu	1620

Poland :—

Gostin	1665
Posnania	1671
Studzian	1674
Biscovia	1722

Spain :—

Valencia	1645
Villena	1650
Madrid	1660
Soria	1670
Granada	1671

Spain—continued.

Cadiz	1671
Barcelona	1690
Saragoza	1690
Majorca	1690
Villa d'Escarai	1695
Carcabuei	1695
Medina di Pomar	1695
Alcalà de Henares	1696
Cordova	1699
Cifuentes	1700
Mursia	1700
Molina in Aragon	1700
Baeza	1702
Vigo in Catalonia	1730
Cuença	1738
Malaga	1742
Seville	?

America :—

Angelopoi	1669
Potosi	1686
Lima	1690
Guatemala	1694
Oaxaca	1695
Mexico	1697

Portugal :—

Lisbon	1668
Oporto	1680
Frexo	1685
Braga	1686
Viseù	1688
Stremozio	1697

Brazil :—

Pernambuco	1671

India :—

Bicciolim	1650
Banda	1655
Goa	1698

Ceylon :—

Two houses of the Goa Oratory.

THE END.

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